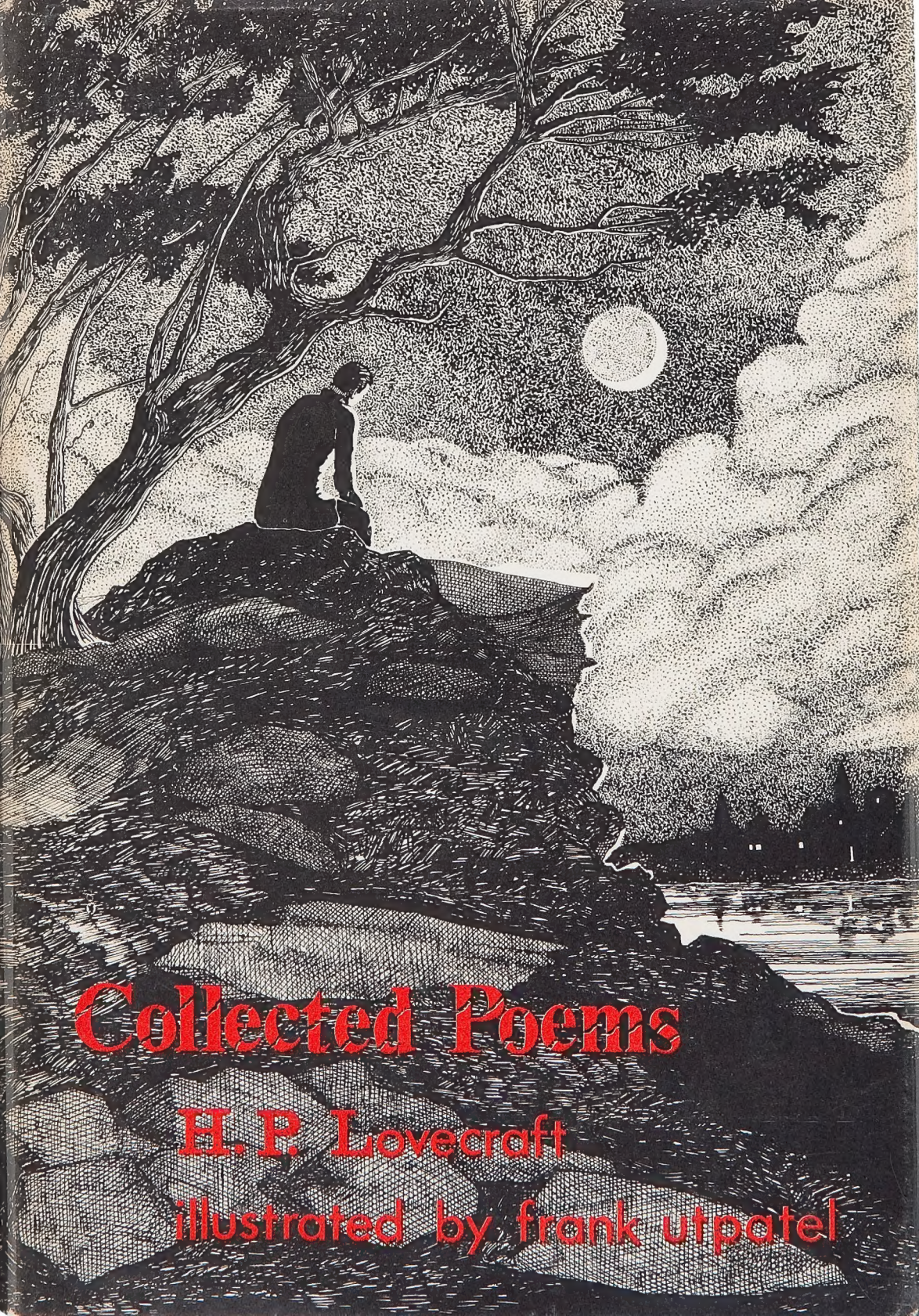




Collected Poems

H. P. Lovecraft

illustrated by frank utpatel



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COLLECTED POEMS

H. P. LOVECRAFT

Illustrations by Frank Utpatel



ARKHAM HOUSE: Publishers

Sauk City, Wisconsin

1963

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But on my porch I trembled, white with haste . . . —*The Key*

COLLECTED POEMS

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FOREWORD

The best of H. P. Lovecraft's poetry is only a minor portion of his work, but it is filled with echoes of his fiction and is clearly related to it. The best of it is, of course, the *Fungi from Yuggoth*, *Psychopompos*, and a few lesser poems written in the 1928-1932 period during which he did so much of his most successful creative work. The best is here, and some of the second-best, and some examples of that very early work—which represents, in fact, the bulk of Lovecraft's verse, a bulk that is not collected here because, as Winfield Townley Scott observed in a brief essay on Lovecraft as a poet, it is "eighteenth-century rubbish." It may be quaint at first reading, it may amuse, but in the mass it is indeed painfully dull, and one can only wonder that anyone, even if only to entertain himself, should have devoted so many pages to this kind of imitative verse when he might much more fruitfully have been setting down more of those macabre stories for which Lovecraft did ultimately achieve the small fame which is rightfully his.

Lovecraft's influences, as Scott has pointed out, were manifest—Thomas Gray, James Thomson, Poe—and perhaps, in his best verse, Edwin Arlington Robinson, whose *Sonnets* appeared in book form only a relatively short time before Lovecraft undertook the writing of the *Fungi from Yuggoth*, *The Messenger*, and those related poems marking his most creative period in poetry. As horror poetry designed to send a shiver or two up its readers' spines, the best of Lovecraft's verse is eminently successful, even if, as poetry seen against the vast panorama of verse today and yesterday it has little significance.

The illustrations accompanying these poems are the work of the first artist to illustrate Lovecraft's fiction in book form; a hiatus of 27 years separates *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* from the *Collected Poems*, and in that interval Frank Utpatel has established himself as an exacting master of the wood-engraving. In these illustrations Utpatel proves himself a skilled interpreter of Lovecraft's poems and adds to them a dimension not readily achieved by type alone.

—AUGUST DERLETH

Sauk City, Wisconsin
September 27, 1962

EARLY POEMS

PROVIDENCE

Where bay and river tranquil blend,
And leafy hillsides rise,
The spires of Providence ascend
Against the ancient skies,

And in the narrow winding ways
That climb o'er slope and crest,
The magic of forgotten days
May still be found to rest.

A fanlight's gleam, a knocker's blow,
A glimpse of Georgian brick—
The sights and sounds of long ago
Where fancies cluster thick.

A flight of steps with iron rail,
A belfry looming tall,
A slender steeple, carved and pale,
A moss-grown garden wall.

A hidden churchyard's crumbling proofs
Of man's mortality,
A rotting wharf where gambrel roofs
Keep watch above the sea.

Square and parade, whose walls have towered
Full fifteen decades long
By cobbled ways 'mid trees embowered,
And slighted by the throng.

Stone bridges spanning languid streams,
Houses perched on the hill,

And courts where mysteries and dreams
The brooding spirit fill.

Steep alley steps by vines concealed,
Where small-paned windows glow
At twilight on a bit of field
That chance has left below.

My Providence! What airy hosts
Turn still thy gilded vanes;
What winds of elf that with grey ghosts
People thine ancient lanes!

The chimes of evening as of old
Above thy valleys sound,
While thy stern fathers 'neath the mould
Make blest thy sacred ground.

May, 1927

ON A GRECIAN COLONNADE IN A PARK

From the green shore the gleaming marble towers
Against the dusk and verdure of the trees:
Beyond, there rise the odours of rare flow'rs
To swell the fragrance of the Eastern breeze.

That breeze, which o'er Hymettus' slopes hath play'd,
Finds beauty here, like that it fondled there;
And to these scenes, in classic semblance made,
Adds the old magic of the Grecian air.

In the calm twilight, as the hush'd wood
Darkens in mystery, obscure and deep,
Forgotten shadows come to dream and brood,
Wak'd for a moment from Elysian sleep.

The dim past beckons thro' the marble gate,
Stately and silent, distant and divine,
While the still pool reflects a duplicate
Within its depths—a shadowy ocean shrine.

Once in the gloom beyond that porch of white
I heard a murmur of ethereal sound,
And seem'd to see, as by some eery light,
A shimm'ring band, with woodland myrtles crown'd.

The waters, too, a strange enchantment breath'd.
And old, old thoughts rose spectral from the grave;
I saw Leucothea, in damp blossoms wreath'd,
And young Palaemon from his coral cave.

That shrine of white, deep in the glassy mere,
Upon my soul a charm resistless cast;
The dark gate lur'd, as to my straining ear
Came voices, calling from the cherish'd past.

And now at eve there lingers in my soul
The haunting mem'ry of that placid scene;
While in my dreams I strain to reach a goal
Where Glaucus waits me, clad in kelpy green.

The portal calls; beyond that wat'ry door
Lies all the bliss my heart hath ever known;
The past is there—yet I stand on the shore
In the cold present, alien and alone.

So as pale forms by sunken altars praise
Deserted gods of years remote and blest,
I, too, shall tread again those ancient ways,
And in the templed deeps sink down to rest.

August, 1920

OLD CHRISTMAS

"Caput apri defero,
Reddens laudes domino."

Ye modern throng, whose tinsel joys reveal
The strain'd and labour'd ecstasies you feel;
Whose empty pastimes hold a spurious bliss,
And feebly copy brighter days than this:
Your clumsy games suspend, and pause to hear
Of genuine mirth, and ancient Christmas cheer!
Would that some Druid, wise in mystic lore,
Might waft me backward to the scenes of yore;
Midst happier years my wand'ring soul detain,
And let me dwell in ANNA's virtuous reign:
Warm in the honest glow of pure content,
And share the boons of rustic merriment.
Awake, Pierian Muse! and call to view
The snow-clad groves and plains my grandsires knew;
Bring back the winding road and neat-clipt hedge
That primly skirts the forest's shadowy edge:
Revive the picture, and adroitly weave
O'er all the subtle spell of Christmas Eve!
Hark to the merry strains of Yuletide song
As the full coach to Norfolk flies along;
Its ample room scarce able to confine
The home-bound crowd whose voices gaily join;

See the stout driver, whose rubescent face
 Grows redder at each wayside stopping-place,
 And the flush'd passengers, their cheeks aglow
 With the cold air and gently stirring snow.
 Behold yon sturdy lads in height of glee,
 From classics, rod, and master's precept free;



Bring back the winding road . . .—*Old Christmas*

Read in each laughing face and manly smile
 The future glories of BRITANNIA's Isle!
 Swift whir the wheels, and smartly snaps the whip;
 The swaying coach assumes a livelier clip;
 Down the long road in majesty we fly,
 An hundred cots and hamlets sweeping by;
 Whilst now and then a rural wain we sight,
 High pil'd with holly for the festive night.
 Up the steep slope our cumbrous chariot creaks,
 Attains the crest, and lowlier meadows seeks;

Before our gaze the steepled town expands,
And grateful eyes survey th' extended lands;
Thro' melting clouds the frosty moonlight gleams,
And gilds the picture with bewitching beams;
O'er spire and roof the genial radiance steals,
And ev'ry grove the pleasing magic feels.
Now rolls the coach thro' many a cobbled street,
Where well-stock's shops the thrifty buyer greet;
A gaping crew our rattling course attend,
And urchins hail the driver as their friend.
The tavern gate at length our flight concludes,
Where varied solace suits our sev'ral moods;
Apicius in the spacious kitchen spies
The hams and bacon that delight his eyes,
And stout Lucullus seeks the sweet relief
Of hot plum-pudding, musty ale, and beef.
Th' important coachman struts in pompous pride,
Whilst four fresh horses to the stage are tied;
The trav'lers take their places one by one,
And the long journey is once more begun.
Brief is our ride, ere thro' the bord'ring trees
The watchful eye a lighted window sees;
Our travels done, the lumb'ring coach we leave,
And the lodge-gates our weary forms receive:
Here Granny Goodwife to an infant train
Repeats her oft-told legends once again;
Tells of the sheeted vision at the Hall,
And how the spectre scales the garden wall.
The wither'd crone with joy our footstep hears,
And greets her former charge with genuine tears;
Dear wrinkled ancient—faithful nurse of yore,
Who nurs'd ourselves, and nurs'd our sire before!
The bliss of Home! What heav'nly raptures vie
With the sweet joys that in our birthplace lie?

Each stone and timber hallow'd by the past,
Where countless generations breath'd their last;
No inch of ground in all those acres wide,
But bears a symbol of ancestral pride:
In park and mansion, wall and hedge we trace
The mystic aura of our honour'd race.
Along the well-kept walks we quickly tread,
And seek the lights of home that gleam ahead;
About our feet canine battalions bark,
That know their master even in the dark.
The full-orb'd moon, with intermittent rays,
About the lawns and terrac'd gardens plays;
On the white paths unusual shadows throws,
And makes a fairy landscape as it glows.
Now opens wide the door, from whence there floats
A merry discord from unnumber'd throats;
'Tis Christmas Eve, and all the household join
In revels fitting to our ancient line:
Master and servant each glad rite go through,
And the old Saturnalian pledge renew;
The servile throng in boist'rous games disport,
While the staid guests to milder joys resort.
Bright Christmas candles the vast hall illumine,
And sprigs of holly deck each spacious room:
The mistletoe in splendour is display'd,
To tempt the swain, and trap th' unwary maid;
But over all the rest in stately fame,
See the great Yule-log with its fulgent flame!
The lordly log a mighty heat exhales,
And o'er the chill of winter air prevails;
Gives an eternal promise of the spring,
That Sol, turn'd back, to Northern climes will bring.
The solstice day our pagan fathers kept,
And hail'd the turning sun whilst Nature slept;

Their simple fanes with evergreen entwin'd,
To fix the coming days of warmth in mind:
Succeeding years elaborate forms impose,
And the plain feast to Saturnalia grows;
But tho' the throng the Roman god adore,
The ancient customs linger as before.
An age still newer blends the heathen glee
With the glad rites of Christ's Nativity;
Yet firm thro' ev'ry change of outward show,
We keep th' ancestral feast of long ago!
Fair as the glow that from the Yule-Clog spreads,
Is the warm welcome ev'ry feaster sheds;
With patriarchal grace the Squire imparts
A genial mirth, and lights the coldest hearts;
On the mix'd crowd a fam'ly blessing lays,
And wakes the Christmas cheer of former days:
Here sport a merry train of young and old;
Aunts, uncles, cousins, kindred shy and bold;
The ample supper ev'ry care dispels,
And each glad guest in happy concord dwells.
With Yuletide songs the time-blest roof awakes,
While the grey harper into music breaks;
Feasting and joy the spacious mansion fill,
Nor dares intrude one jarring note of ill.
Upon the oaken floor the children find
Ecstatic bliss in toys of ev'ry kind;
Less simple gifts the elder throng reward,
But all partake the season's blest accord.
Now comes the dance, wherein each airy school
Of jigs and capers claims alternate rule;
The honest Squire leads forth his gentle spouse,
And with a rigadon excites the house
Mol Pately, and the homely Country Dance,
Vie with the latest tripping steps from France;

Terpsichore, amaz'd, the scene observes,
And flees the unfamiliar dips and curves;
Yet more of honest joy therin resides,
Than in cold London's stateliest turns and glides!
The dancing o'er, we climb the broad oak stair,
And seek the bedside with an evening pray'r;
On the still night in sacred chorus floats
The waits' sweet harmony, in faint-borne notes:
Such choirs, methinks, remind the grateful earth
Of herald angels at our Saviour's birth!
Thus lull'd with liquid song, divinely blest,
On Christmas Eve we softly sink to rest.
Hail to the Holy Morn! when joy and peace
Reign o'er the land, and ev'ry boon increase;
A golden sun th' encircling park awakes,
And gaily glitters on the ice-bound lakes.
Each frosted lawn and whiten'd terrace gleams
With growing splendour in the rising beams,
While silver chimes from gorgeous spires proclaim
To list'ning meads the great Messiah's fame.
In fam'ly chapel we devoutly hear
The virtuous Squire read forth the word of cheer;
Then to the morning meal and daily walk,
Where innocence enjoys its harmless talk;
In order'd gardens we at ease converse,
And the fond bliss of Christmastide rehearse.
Now sounds the bell from that proud steepled fane
Wherein the parson holds benignant reign;
Down the long slope with rev'rent step we go,
And meet the peasants from the town below:
Each rural clown his Sunday raiment wears,
And ev'ry face a smile of greeting bears.
Behold the churchyard, where in silence lie
The honest villagers of days gone by;

From such brave blood great ENGLAND rose of yore—
God grant the future may produce us more!
Within the church a fervent sermon rings,
And the full choir a pious anthem sings;
The rural choristers chant loud and strong,
And have in spirit what they lack in song.
The black-gown'd chaplain, modest of his wit,
Reads the wise precepts other parsons writ;
No laurels for himself he seeks to gain,
But gives his flock the best his books contain.
The service done, our genial Squire extends
An invitation to his humble friends;
Up to the hall in many an awkward group,
The gaping swains and happy ploughmen troop:
Beneath the master's roof they take the feast
That richly waits the lowliest and the least;
With merry pastimes stir the quiet air,
And bless their patron for the lib'ral fare.
'Twas thus the Romans at this season gave
Saturnian licence to the serf and slave:
Our British race the ancient gift improve,
And treat the peasant with paternal love.
Assist, gay gastronomic Muse, whilst I
In noble strains sing pork and Christmas pie!
What quill like mine can more than half afford
A proper notion of the Yuletide board?
Quick to the hall a num'rous crowd pour in
At the sharp summons of the rolling-pin;
Saucers and flagons, cups and many a plate,
In festive eagerness the spread await:
Th' impatient throng half grudge the pious space
That the good Squire consumes in saying grace,
And from each throat a grateful sigh is drawn,
As the Boar's-Head in majesty comes on.

The stout grey butler pompously sustains
The silver plate, and shows officious pains:
One on each side, two sober menials bear
Refulgent dips with ceremonious care.
With rosemary the platter is bedeck'd,
Whilst harpers' chords increase the glad effect:
The ready crowd an Oxford song repeat,
And laud in ancient style the roasted meat;
The college Latin, pleasing to recite,
Improves the feast, and whets the appetite.
But not alone the stately Boar is plac'd
To please the palate and reward the taste;
Huge sirloin mountains dot the damask field,
And peacock pies a haunting odour yield:
Puddings and gravies, sauces, roasts, and stews,
Enchant the diner, and defy the Muse!
Now come the servant band with brush and tray
To clear the remnants of the feast away;
Upon the board the Wassail Bowl is laid,
Fill'd with a nectar by old precepts made:
To each the silver dish is pass'd around,
Whilst merry wassail songs aloft resound;
In ancient fashion ev'ry guest partakes,
And the rich wine unwonted brilliance wakes—
Alas! that man should ever be so prone
To seek a Bacchic humour not his own!
Quips, jests, and stories now untrammel'd start,
And harmless gossip plays a pleasing part;
Legends and anecdotes appear in state,
And grow the larger as they circulate:
Ee'n the staid parson drops his sober mien,
And joins the others in the jovial scene.
But mad hilarity at length subsides,
And prattling youth its sweeter joy provides;

The hall is clear'd, and all the infant throng
Conduct their pastimes with diverting song.
Unreason's Abbott full dominion claims,
And leads the children in their ancient games.
Quaint mummers thro' the spacious house parade,
And former times in costume are display'd;
Old Father Christmas dances hand in hand
With some odd Indian of the western land;
Turks jostle Roundheads, all the mimic train
Obey the laws of Saturn's festal reign.
Gay Drury-Lane such acting ne'er beheld,
And Covent-Garden's masques are here excell'd:
Frolick and fun in laughing pantomime,
Surpass description, and confound our rhyme!
The evening shades touch many a tired head
As the young rompers breathless climb to bed;
Our older band in fireside comfort sit,
And tell our tales, or try our shafts of wit:
O'er all the company a peace descends,
Whilst the great log its cheering radiance lends.
To ev'ry mind there comes a thankful thought
For the rich blessings that the day hath brought,
And many a scoffer, bred in London air,
Midst this calm scene sends up a silent pray'r.
Here virtue rules, and each contented swain
Enjoys the bliss of his paternal plain;
A life like this benignant Heav'n design'd
To lift the soul, and soothe the fretful mind:
Why must our modern wits in scorn refuse
These rural realms their sires were proud to choose?
Above the frozen grove the moon appears,
And tender light the quiet garden cheers;
The winding walks, the fountains, and the green,
Take on the semblance of a fairy scene:
Light dancing o'er the sod, an elfin crew

In fond imagination come to view ;
And friendly pines in rhythmic measures sway,
Their patron nymphs responsive to the play.
All the soft picture seems alive with grace,
And peopled with a sweet ethereal race:
Thro' the still air bewitching spirits glide,
And spread the sorcery of Christmastide !
Must I awake to find these visions flown,
The past long dead, and happiness unknown ?
Have honest merriment and rural cheer
Gone with the fleeting snows of yesteryear ?
Unhappy age ! whose joys so ill contrast
With the spontaneous pleasures of the past ;
Wherein our languid youth to gloom resort,
And listless children must be taught their sport :
Whose arts the stamp of waning pow'r confess,
And hide their weakness in eccentric dress ;
Canst thou not see thy many woes proceed
From false ambition, commerce, haste and greed ?
Wise is the man who spurns the seething times,
Nor madly up the hill of Plutus climbs ;
Rests on his own hereditary soil
Remote from care or avaricious broil ;
His father's place assumes, and keeps his name
On the calm records of agrestic fame.
For such an one the field of learning waits,
And art attends his hospitable gates ;
'Tis his to feed the flame of sense and wit,
And ancient lore to future times transmit ;
Preserve the good his grandsires prov'd before,
And drive the wolf of dulness from the door ;
Each Gothic novelty with skill attack,
And bring the grace of former ages back.
Ye hoary groves ! whose many-centuried oaks
The wistful bard with longing lyre invokes,

Look down once more in your imperial state
 On such a race as made OLD ENGLAND great!
 View once again the hearty rural Squire
 Whose lib'ral soul contain'd a gen'rous fire;
 Whose mild dominion sway'd the peasant band,
 And spread contentment thro' the grateful land:
 Such, and such only, can the past revive;
 And keep our well-lov'd Christmas joys alive;
 Meanwhile the Muse, in reminiscent strain,
 Forget the years, and sings those joys again!

NEW-ENGLAND FALLEN

*Hic, ubi nocturnae Numa constituebat amicae,
 Nunc sacri fontis nemus et delubra locantur
 Judaeis, quorum cophinus faenunique supellex;
 Omnis enim populo mercedem peudere jussa est
 Arbor, et ejectis mendicat silva Camenis.*

Juvenal, iii, 12-16.

When, long ago, America was young,
 And held by yeomen from Britannia sprung,
 New-England was with hardy rustics fill'd,
 Green were her fields, and diligently till'd.
 My grandsire John, beside a rocky hill,
 'Mid pastures water'd by a sparkling rill,
 Erected firm his unpretentious cot;
 Sunk deep his well, laid out his garden-plot;
 Built sheds for poultry, hives for honey-bees;
 Barns for his cattle; clear'd the land of trees.
 The meadows wide with walls he fenc'd around,
 From dawn to darkness reach'd his daily toil;
 Each spring with seed he sow'd the fertile soil:

And in the heat of each midsummer day,
With sharpen'd scythe he mow'd the leaning hay,
'Neath harvest moon he reap'd the rip'ning crop,
In winter's blast his axe was heard to chop
The wind-sway'd oaks and maples of the wood
That on his hillside slopes majestic stood.
In grassy pastures, teeming with rich loam,
His brawny kine were wont to feed and roam;
Thus did he live, and call'd his humble acres "HOME".

The wooden farm-house, painted snowy white,
Had in it more of broadness than of height.
A sloping roof its safe protection lent;
In vain the storms outside their fury spent.
Above the roof, the stone-built chimney tower'd,
Through which the smoke in inky torrents pour'd.
Around the door, the clinging ivy twin'd;
The sunny garden brilliant flow'rs confin'd.
The rooms within were scrubb'd until they shone
By the good wife of honest Farmer John.
Beside the fire at night the rustic sat,
And listen'd to the singing of his cat,
Or read the Scriptures to his wife and son,
Or through the window watch'd the rising moon.
His child by maxims wise and good was rear'd.
Virtue he lov'd, Immortal God he fear'd.
The vice and folly of the world he spurn'd,
But at the district-school true wisdom learn'd
From his kind master, who with precepts sage
Refin'd and shap'd the growth of tender age.
With no low trade his pliant mind was fill'd,
Nor was his wit by friv'lous notions kill'd.
Few were his studies, but with zeal pursu'd;
With solid learning was the youth imbu'd.

His hours of leisure were discreetly spent;
In harmless joys and sports he liv'd content.
Sturdy he grew, by nature's certain law;
No towns he knew, nor crowded streets he saw.

Each Sunday in his stout capacious chaise,
John drove to meeting, God on high to praise.
New-shav'd, and in the finest of his coats,
The psalms he sang, with cheerful ringing notes.
With mind devout, his soul he sought to save,
Whilst lib'ral off'rings to the church he gave,
With ear attentive he the sermon heard;
The parson's counsels, and the holy word.
Blest was that parson, noblest of mankind;
True his belief, exalted was his mind
Sinners he sav'd, and all creation lov'd:
By simple words, his flock to tears he mov'd;
Inspir'd he preach'd, and seraphim above approv'd.

The farmer's needs were few, and well supply'd
By laden ships that roll'd upon the tide,
From distant strands by fav'ring zephyrs blown
Up to the wharves that grac'd each seaport town.
On wind-swept docks the Yankees, wond'ring, view'd
The swarthy sailors, freaks of alien blood.
They little fear'd, as they enjoy'd the breeze,
Their realm would soon be fill'd by such as these;
Unwarn'd they were; their ignorance was bliss;
They knew not how their land should go amiss.
Would that I might possess such pescieuce as this!

Oft to the village drove good Farmer John,
To stock his larder, and supply his barn.
'Mid shady streets he sought the village store,
And hail'd the rustics cluster'd 'round the door.

He bought with wisdom, and with honest heart
He'd trade in horses at the rural mart.
Then when night came, toward home John's wain inclin'd,
His new-bought nag a-trotting on behind.
And as he rode, with patriotic pride,
In sunset's glow he view'd the countryside.
The planted fields spread out before his gaze;
The steeple pierc'd the gath'ring evening haze,
Whilst here and there a tidy farmhouse show'd
Its white expanse beside the dark'ning road.
Betwixt the trees, a wand'ring lane he saw;
Stone were its walls, and mossy was its floor.
The neighbours' boys addrest him through the gloam
As with their dogs they drove the cattle home.
Beside the brooklet stood the water-mill;
The day's work done, its pond'rous wheel was still.
Peace hover'd o'er each vale and gently rolling hill.

Agrestic bliss! Why canst thou not remain?
Why must the years bring evil in their train?
Why have the rustics' sons forsaken home,
In dismal towns and distant lands to roam?
Why have they left the meadows of their birth;
Quit rural ease for urban want and dearth?
Why are base foreign boors allow'd to dwell
Amongst the hills where Saxon greatness fell;
Live their low lives, themselves in filth degrade
As monkeys haunt a palace long decay'd?

Less fresh and green seem now New-England's hills,
The air is tainted by the smoke of mills;
The tott'ring houses, scarcely held erect,
Shake in the wind, and crumble from neglect,
Though in a few some wretched aliens dwell
'Midst hideous squalor, and repulsive smell.

The empty church with mould'ring rot decays;
 The lofty steeple on its fast'ning sways:
 Within its grass-grown yard, in peaceful sleep,
 The parson lies, but none remain to weep.
 The village rings with ribald foreign cries;
 Around the wine-shops loaf with bleary eyes
 A vicious crew, that mock the name of "man,"
 Yet dare to call themselves "American."
 New-England's ships no longer ride the sea;



Old New England seems to live again . . . —*On a New England Village*

Once prosp'rous ports are sunk in poverty.
The rotting wharves as ruins tell the tale
Of days when Yankees mann'd the swelling sail.
The Indies yield no more their cargoes rare;
The sooty mill's New-England's present care:
The noisy mill, by foreign peasants run,
Supplants the glorious shipping that hath gone.
In arid fields, the kine no longer low;
The soil knows not the furrow of the plough;
The rolling meadows all neglected lie,
Fleck'd here and there by some foul alien's sty.
The school no more contains the busy class;
The walls are down, the ruins chok'd with grass.
Within the gate-post swallows build their nests;
Upon the hill, the gentle master rests.
The mossy lane with briers is o'ergrown;
The bound'ry walls are shapeless heaps of stone,
And through the mourning trees the winds in sorrow moan.

Whence comes this devastation of the land,
This awful blow of the Almighty's hand?
Where is New-England, that our fathers knew,
Where pious men in rugged virtue grew?
Where law and order rul'd the rustic realm,
And honour stood unconquer'd at the helm?
Gone! with the noble race that gave it life,
And given o'er to foreign crime and strife.
The Saxon yeoman made New-England great,
And when he leaves, he leaves it to foul fate.
No baser tribe can take his honour'd place,
And with like virtues old New-England grace.
This pow'r lies lock'd within the noble BRITISH race!

Finis

April 1912

ON A NEW-ENGLAND VILLAGE SEEN BY MOONLIGHT

The squalid noisome village lies asleep;
The dusk and quiet hide the monstrous mill:
The bats their melancholy watches keep,
Whilst all the rabbles' daytime cries are still.

A friendly wind, soft sweeping from the seas,
The tainted air for one brief moment clears;
A friendly moon, dim shining through the trees,
Conceals the ruin wrought by evil years.

The alien serfs escape our sorrowing view;
The tortur'd mind is lighten'd of its pain;
Our own ancestral spirits reign anew,
And old New-England seems to live again.

An idle moonbeam in the village square
Lights up the fountain and the empty green;
Plays o'er the ancient structures rotting there,
Yet veils the sad decadence of the scene.

Yon rustic cottage on the mountain's side,
Leems still some pious farmer's simple home;
The sordid crew, that in it now abide,
Are sunk in sleep, and swath'd in grateful gloom.

A stealthy ray illumines the mounting spire
That crowns the temple where our fathers pray'd,
But, wisely kind, the light ascends no higher,
And leaves the new-built popish cross in shade.

Where dwells that race, beneath whose rule benign
The village rich in bliss and virtue grew,

The moonlight shews us, when its pencils shine
Amongst the mounds and tablets by the yew.

The hopeful cry, that from the woes which blend
In modern times, new blessings shall emerge;
But Contemplation mourns New-England's end,
And, drap'd in sack-cloth, chants her country's dirge.

Sept. 7, 1913

ASTROPHOBOS

In the midnight heavens burning
Through ethereal deeps afar,
Once I watch'd with restless yearning
An alluring, aureate star;
Ev'ry eve aloft returning,
Gleaming nigh the Arctic Car.

Mystic waves of beauty blended
With the gorgeous golden rays;
Phantasies of bliss descended
In a myrrh'd Elysian haze;
And in lyre-born chords extended
Harmonies of Lydian lays.

There (thought I) lie scenes of pleasure,
Where the free and blessed dwell,
And each moment bears a treasure,
Freighted with the lotos-spell,
And there floats a liquid measure
From the lute of Israfel.

There (I told myself) were shining
Worlds of happiness unknown,

Peace and Innocence entwining
By the Crowned Virtue's throne;
Men of light, their thoughts refining
Purer, fairer, than our own.

Thus I mus'd, when o'er the vision
Crept a red delirious change;
Hope dissolving to derision,
Beauty to distortion strange;
Hymnic chords in weird collision,
Spectral sights in endless range.

Crimson burn'd the star of madness
As behind the beams I peer'd;
All was woe that seem'd but gladness
Ere my gaze with Truth was sear'd;
Cacodaemons, mir'd with madness,
Through the fever'd flick'ring leer'd.

Now I know the fiendish fable
That the golden glitter bore;
Now I shun the spangled sable
That I watch'd and lov'd before;
But the horror, set and stable,
Haunts my soul forevermore!

Nov. 21, 1917

SUNSET

The cloudless day is richer at its close;
A golden glory settles on the lea;
Soft, stealing shadows hint of cool repose
To mellowing landscape, and to calming sea.

And in that nobler, gentler, lovelier light,
The soul to sweeter, loftier bliss inclines;
Freed from the noonday glare, the favour'd sight
Increasing grace in earth and sky divines.

But ere the purest radiance crowns the green,
Or fairest lustre fills th' expectant grove,
The twilight thickens, and the fleeting scene
Leaves but a hallow'd memory of love!

TO PAN

Seated in a woodland glen
By a shallow reedy stream
Once I fell a-musing, when
I was lull'd into a dream.

From the brook a shape arose
Half a man and half a goat,
Hoofs it had instead of toes
And a beard adorn'd its throat.

On a set of rustic reeds
Sweetly play'd this hybrid man
Naught car'd I for earthly needs,
For I knew that this was Pan.

Nymphs and Satyrs gather'd 'round
To enjoy the lively sound.

All too soon I woke in pain
And return'd to haunts of men
But in rural vales I'd fain
Live and hear Pan's pipes again.

Sept. 1902

A SUMMER SUNSET AND EVENING

(In the metre—though perchance not the manner—of the
"Poly-Olbion" of Mike Drayton, Esq.)

The ruddy sun sinks down beyond the purple hill,
And all the painted west an hundred colours fill.
The bars of dark'ning clouds that streak the flaming sky
Set off the splendid scene and please the watching eye.
The shadow'd glen behind foretastes the coming night;
The placid pool before reflects the fading light.
The harmonies of birds are hushed with the eve,
But straight the insect choirs the still of dusk relieve.
Sweet are the summer chords the little host entune,
Whilst frogs in lily'd pool salute the rising moon.
Above yon tow'ring pine peeps out a single ray,
The first of Heav'n's bright host to speed departing day.
And ev'ry shade that falls another starlet brings,
Till all the sphere above a silent anthem sings.
In pastures that extend to realms beyond our view,
The folding flow'rets nod, made drowsy by the dew.
And all the scene about an alter'd aspect gains,
As moonbeams gild the brook and wake responding strains.
Now in the humid brake the fitful firefly's gleam
Winks like the mirror'd star in lake and placid stream.
From branches arching o'er the hooting owl awakes,
And glimps'd against the moon his stately flight betakes.

All sights and sounds are blent to rouse the thoughtful mind,
And who that looks and hears adores not all combin'd?
The pageant of the night with rev'rent eye we see,
For Deity's in all, and all in Deity!

Epilogue

Behold kind Nature in her sweetest mood,
When neither day nor solar glare intrude.
What man so dull he faileth to receive
The darker beauties of the summer eve?
Egad! 'tis dull my ardour to confine
To Alexandrine pace, and Drayton's line.
Alone in fair Quinsnicket's wood by night,
I fain would follow Thomson's smoother flight!

TO MISTRESS SOPHIA SIMPLE, QUEEN OF THE CINEMA

Before our sight your mobile face
Depicts your joys or woes distracting;
We marvel at your winsome grace—
And wish you'd learn the art of acting!

Your eyes, we vow, surpass the stars;
Your mouth is like the bow of Cupid;
Your rose-ting'd cheeks no wrinkle mars—
Yet why are you so sweetly stupid?

The hero views you with delight,
To win your hand forever working;
We pity him—the witless wight—
To fall a victim to your smirking!



Mistress Sophia Simple

And yet, why should we wail in rhyme
 Because so crudely you dissemble?
 We can't expect, for one small dime,
 To see a Woffington or Kemble!

August, 1917

A YEAR OFF

Had I a year to idle through,
 With cash to waste and no restriction,
 I'd plan a programme to outdo
 The wildest feats of travel fiction.

On steamship guides I'd slake my thirst,
 And railway maps would make me wiser—
 America consider'd first
 To please the local advertiser.

O'er England and the Continent
I'd chart a course to shame the sages,
In each cathedral town intent
To catch the colour of the ages.

Paris and Rome I would not miss;
Without the Rhine I'd be no planner,
For one must make a jaunt like this
A Grand Tour in the ancient manner!

But Europe is a trifle trite,
So I would spare no pains in learning
How best to scan in casual flight
The East, where skeiks and sands are burning.

I'd look up ferries on the Nile,
And 'bus fares for the trip to Mecca;
Have chemists test in proper style
The drinking-fountain of Rebecca.

The route of ev'ry Tigris barge
I'd note, and find how much they'd ask us;
What good hotels in Bagdad charge,
And yellow taxis in Damascus.

And I would surely have on hand
The folders of that great excursion,
The Golden Road to Samarkand,
Thro' Bahai bow'rs and gardens Persian.

Beyond, the Pullman rates I'd get
For Kiao-chau and Yokohama,
Arranging passage thro' Thibet
To dally with the Dalai Lama.

In tropic isles I'd plan to stay
 Till South Sea melodies would bore me,
 And for the North Pole book a day,
 Where only Peary went before me.

Thus might I scheme—till in the end
 The year would slip away unheeded,
 My money safe with me to spend,
 And the wild outing scarcely needed!

July 24, 1925

SIR THOMAS TRYOUT

(Died Nov. 15, 1921)

To the venerable cat of a quaint gentleman in His Majesty's
 Province of y^e Massacuhsetts-Bay, who publishes an
 amateur magazine call'd *The Tryout*.

The autumn hearth is strangely cold
 Despite the leaping flame,
 And all the cheer that shone of old
 Seems lessen'd, dull'd, and tame.

For on the rug where lately doz'd
 A small and furry form,
 An empty space is now disclos'd,
 That no mere blaze can warm.

The frosty plain and woodland walk
 In equal sadness sigh

For one who may no longer stalk
With sylvan hunter's eye.

And if as olden Grecians tell,
Amidst the thickets deep
A host of fauns and dryads dwell,
I know that they must weep.

Must weep when autumn twilight brings
Its mem'ries quaint to view,
Of all the little playful things
That TOM was wont to do.

So tho' the busy world may pass
With ne'er a tearful sign
The tiny mound of struggling grass
Beneath the garden vine.

There's many an eye that fills tonight,
And many a pensive strain
That sounds for him who stole from sight
In the November rain.

No sage can trace his soul's advance,
Or say it lives at all,
For Death against our curious glance
Has rear'd a mighty wall.

Yet tender Fancy fain would stray
To fair Hesperian bow'rs,
Where TOM may always purr and play
Amidst the sun and flow'rs.

PHAETON

Critic, whose soul a busy world hath slain,
Whose taste is but the impress of the times,
Bid me no more my eager quill restrain,
Or court the multitude in earthly rhymes.

Say not again that passion, bliss, and woe,
The hackney'd feelings of the gen'ral heart,
Must fill my days, in all my visions glow,
And throb triumphant through my labour'd art.

Let the stout swain, whom no reflections wake,
Chant of his Phyllis, and his hopes and fears;
Let earth-bound clods of such tame things partake,
Dance with vain joy, and shed their trivial tears.

Why should I fret in microcosmic bonds
That chafe the spirit, and the mind repress,
When thorough the clouds gleam beckoning beyonds
Whose shining vistas mock man's littleness?

Can seeing intellect contented lie
Within the confines of our tiny race,
When overhead yawns wide the starry sky,
Pregnant with secrets of unfathom'd space?

AUGUST

Come, mellow month, whose full-blown charms
O'er mead and wood diffuse their grace;
Whose ardour all the valley warms,
And glads the grateful mountain's face.

The waving corn in yonder field,
Delighted, owns thy genial ray;
Whilst clover'd plains adoring yield
The frankincense of new-mown hay.

The sky a lovelier blue puts on;
The sun thro' Virgo proudly rides;
The lark sings sweeter at the dawn;
The stream with purer crystal glides.

The grove with tropic plenty flow'rs,
And Summer reigns in regal state;
Precious the boon of earlier hours,
Yet now doth each one culminate.

To youthful bards the Spring I give;
To sighing swains the June divine;
But I midst riper joys would live,
And choose the August days as mine!

DEATH

Think not that Death malignly waits,
A weapon of the hostile Fates,
To strike the sinner down;
'Tis but a link in Nature's plan
To join succeeding growths of man,
And life complete to crown.

All finite things unfailing tend
From a beginning to an end,
For what is Time but Change?

What goal of growth could Life possess,
If stretch'd out into emptiness,
With bleak unbounded range?

What bard with grace could ever sing
The cloying charm of endless Spring,
Or Praise eternal day?
Since man is tun'd to Time alone,
The wise in Death a friend must own,
And bow to Nature's way!

TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

(Written in 1918)

Starry folds, whose matchless splendour
Long hath bless'd our grateful eyes;
Gleaming with a light more tender
Than your rivals in the skys,
Wave, as always in a glory
None may tarnish or excel;
Keep upon our lips the story
That our fathers lov'd to tell!

May your grandeur by unceasing,
Proud reminder of the past,
As in noble rank increasing,
Each new ray outshines the last;
Yesterday for one young nation
You in valour were unfurl'd,
But today your constellation
Beams aloft for all the world!

TO A YOUTH

(Dedicated to Master Alfred Galpin, Jun.)

Learned boy, upon whose brow
Sits the green Thessalian bay,
Heir to youthful joys that now
Bloom along the fragrant way;
Pluck thy garlands with a care
For the winter days ahead;
Laurels canst thou gaily wear
When the roses all are dead!

Dryads chase thy tripping feet,
Muses love thine eager eyes;
Keep thou as the Dryads sweet,
Grow thou as the Muses wise.
Beauties round thy pathway wind,
Virtues round thy forehead dart;
Sip the beauties for thy mind,
Clasp the virtues to thy heart!

Youth is but a swift caress,
Age is long and cold and drear;
Feast thy sight on loveliness
In the springtide of thy year.
Flow'rs and dreams beside thee lie,
Gather wisely what will last;
Flow'rs will wither bye and bye,
Dreams will keep for thee the past!

So adown the blossomy road
Wander lightly, wander free;
It will not again be trod,
Gentle traveller, by thee.

Joys are fleeting—mourn not deep—
Mem'ries for the future store;
Then, unfearing, sink to sleep,
Blest and dreamless evermore!

MY FAVORITE CHARACTER

About this season 'tis a smart proceeding
In mild aesthetic groups and letter'd places
To choose a fav'rite from one's daily reading,
Explaining brightly one's selective basis;
But sure, whate'er I say can only hurt me,
For fac'd with such a test, my wits desert me!

I'm told that certain tastes are e'er in fashion—
Safe, tame, and classic, e'en tho' somewhat shopworn;
A choice thus order'd ne'er will be a rash one,
Suiting those thoughts and standards on the top worn—
Esmond, D. Copperfield, or Hiawatha,
Or anything from some nice high-school author.

A few gay souls affect with scorn to question
The proper pref'rences of milder mortals,
And with much pride display a tough digestion
For such spic'd themes as lurk behind lock'd portals:
Jurgen, Clerk, Nicholas, Boccaccio's misses,
And sundry things of Joyce's, from "Ulysses."

But if sincerity be not outmoded
In this degen'rate day of muddled meaning,
Much may be said for those whose hearts are loaded
With figures of a lowlier mood and leaning—
Boyhood's own idols, whom the sages hear not—
Frank Merriwell, Nick Carter, and Fred Fearnot!

Then, too, 'tis hard just now to dodge the moderns,
Our cubists, sharply to tomorrow dated;
Aesthetes of model 1930—odd ones
Whose palates with all thought and grace are sated:
Trust them to give some shapeless freak a trial
From T. S. Eliot or last April's *Dial*!

Now as for me, I am no man of learning
To know just what I like and why I like it;
Letters and hist'ry set my poor head turning
Till not a choice can permanently strike it!
My fav'rite? Fie on printed information—
I'll frankly hand myself the nomination!

TO TEMPLETON AND MOUNT MONADNOCK

In peace beneath the crystal summer skies,
Behold the spires of Templeton arise;
Around the green the grove-deck'd mead expands,
Whilst vary'd blossoms tint the smiling lands.
Pleas'd with the beauties of the blest domain,
No Goldsmith long could mourn sweet Auburn's plain;
The rural grace Old England lov'd to view,
Here blooms again, transplanted to the New!
The rip'ning corn along the furrow'd leas
Nods in the sun, and dances in the breeze;
In stately elm and stout-lim'd oak we trace
Th' enduring glories of New-England's race.
Can ancient bliss from such a scene depart,
Or dull decadence pain the pensive heart?
Can with'ring change ancestral shades o'er-ride,
And aliens live where sturdy Saxons died?

May fav'ring fate a kindly respite lend,
 And keep this vale untainted to the end!
 Look to the north, where Grand Monadnock's height
 Enchains the fancy, and rewards the sight;
 Such rock-ribb'd hills our own New-England gave
 To mould her sons as rugged and as brave.
 Ancient Monadnock! Silent, pine-girt hill,
 Whose majesty could move a Whittier's quill;
 Whose distant brow the humbler pen excites;
 Whose purpled slope the raptur'd gaze invites;
 Stand thou, Great Sentinel, though nations fall—
 In thee New-England triumphs over all!

THE POE-ET'S NIGHTMARE

A Fable

Luxus tumultus semper causa est.

Lucullus Languish, student of the skies,
 And connoisseur of rarebits and mince pies,
 A bard by choice, a grocer's clerk by trade,
 (Grown pessimist through honours long delay'd)
 A secret yearning bore, that he might shine
 In breathing numbers, and in song divine.
 Each day his fountain pen was wont to drop
 An ode or dirge or two about the shop,
 Yet naught could strike the chord within his heart
 That throb'd for poesy, and cry'd for art.
 Each eve he sought his bashful Muse to wake
 With overdoses of ice cream and cake,
 But though th' ambitious youth a dreamer grew
 Th' Aonian Nymph declin'd to come to view.

Sometimes at dusk he scour'd the heav'ns afar
Searching for raptures in the evening star;
One night he strove to catch a tale untold
In crystal deeps—but only caught a cold.
So pin'd Lucullus with his lofty woe,
Till one drear day he bought a set of Poe:
Charm'd with the cheerful horrors there display'd,
He vow'd with gloom to woo the Heav'nly Maid.
Of Auber's Tarn and Yaanek's slope he dreams,
And weaves an hundred Ravens in his schemes.
Not far from our young hero's peaceful home,
Lies the fair grove wherein he loves to roam.
Though but a stunted copse in vacant lot,
He dubs it Temp-e, and adores the spot;
When shallow puddles dot the wooded plain,
And brim o'er muddy banks with muddy rain,
He calls them limpid lakes or poison pools,
(Depending on which bard his fancy rules.)
'Tis here he comes with Heliconian fire
On Sundays when he smites the Attic lyre;
And here one afternoon he brought his gloom,
Resolv'd to chant a poet's lay of doom.
Roget's Thesaurus, and a book of rhymes,
Provide the rungs whereon his spirit climbs:
With this grave retinue he trod the grove
And pray'd the Fauns he might a Poe-et prove.
But sad to tell, ere Pegasus flew high,
The not unrelish'd supper hour drew nigh;
Our tuneful swain th' imperious call attends,
And soon above the groaning table bends.
Though it were too prosaic to relate
Th' exact particulars of what he ate,
(Such long-drawn lists the hasty reader skips,
Like Homer's well-known catalogue of ships)

This much we swear: that as adjournment near'd,
 A monstrous lot of cake had disappear'd!
 Soon to his chamber the young bard repairs,
 And courts soft Somnus with sweet Lydian airs;
 Through open casement scans the star-strown deep,
 And 'neath Orion's beams sinks off to sleep.
 Now start from airy dell the elfin train
 That dance each midnight o'er the sleeping plain,
 To bless the just, or cast a warning spell
 On those who dine not wisely, but too well.
 First Deacon Smith they plague, whose nasal glow
 Comes from what Holmes hath call'd "Elixir Pro";
 Group'd round the couch his visage they deride,
 Whilst through his dreams unnumber'd serpents glide.
 Next troop the little folk into the room
 Where snores our young Endymion, swath'd in gloom:
 A smile lights up his boyish face, whilst he
 Dreams of the moon—or what he ate at tea.
 The chieftain elf th' unconscious youth surveys,
 And on his form a strange enchantment lays:
 Those lips, that lately trill'd with frosted cake,
 Uneasy sounds in slumbrous fashion make;
 At length their owner's fancies they rehearse,
 And lisp this awesome Poe-em in blank verse:

* * *

Aletheia Phrikodes

Omnia risus et omnia pulvis et omnia nihil.

Demoniac clouds, up-pil'd in chasmy reach
 Of soundless heav'n, smother'd the brooding night;
 Nor came the wonted whisp'rings of the swamp,
 Nor voice of autumn wind along the moor,
 Nor mutter'd noises of th' insomnious grove

Whose black recesses never saw the sun.
Within that grove a hideous hollow lies,
Half bare of trees; a pool in centre lurks
That none dares sound; a tarn of murky face,
(Though naught can prove its hue, since light of day,
Affrighted, shuns the forest-shadow's banks.)
Hard by, a yawning hillside grotto breathes
From deeps unvisited, a dull, dank air
That sears the leaves on certain stunted trees
Which stand about, clawing the spectral gloom
With evil boughs. To this accursed dell
Come woodland creatures, seldom to depart:
Once I beheld, upon a crumbling stone
Set altar-like before the cave, a thing
I saw not clearly, yet from glimpsing, fled.
In this half-dusk I meditate alone
At many a weary noontide, when without
A world forgets me in its sun-blest mirth.
Here howl by night the werewolves, and the souls
Of those that knew me well in other days.
Yet on this night the grove spake not to me;
Nor spake the swamp, nor wind along the moor
Nor moan'd the wind about the lonely eaves
Of the bleak, haunted pile wherein I lay.
I was afraid to sleep, or quench the spark
Of the low-burning taper by my couch.
I was afraid when through the vaulted space
Of the old tow'r, the clock-ticks died away
Into a silence so profound and chill
That my teeth chatter'd—giving yet no sound.
Then flicker'd low the light, and all dissolv'd
Leaving me floating in the hellish grasp
Of body'd blackness, from whose beating wings
Came ghoulish blasts of charnel-scented mist.

Things vague, unseen, unfashion'd, and unnam'd
Jostled each other in the seething void
That gap'd, chaotic, downward to a sea
Of speechless horror, foul with writhing thoughts.
All this I felt, and felt the mocking eyes
Of the curs'd universe upon my soul;
Yet naught I saw nor heard, till flash'd a beam
Of lurid lustre through the rotting heav'ns,
Playing on scenes I labour'd not to see.
Methought the nameless tarn, alight at last,
Reflected shapes, and more reveal'd within
Those shocking depths that ne'er were seen before;
Methought from out the cave a demon train,
Grinning and smirking, reel'd in fiendish rout;
Bearing within their reeking paws a load
Of carrion viands for an impious feast.
Methought the stunted trees with hungry arms
Grop'd greedily for things I dare not name;
The while a stifling, wraith-like noisomeness
Fill'd all the dale, and spoke a larger life
Of uncorporeal hideousness awake
In the half-sentient wholeness of the spot.
Now glow'd the ground, and tarn, and cave, and trees,
And moving forms, and things not spoken of,
With such a phosphorescence as men glimpse
In the putrescent thickets of the swamp
Where logs decaying lie, and rankness reigns.
Methought a fire-mist drap'd with lucent fold
The well-remember'd features of the grove,
Whilst whirling ether bore in eddying streams
The hot, unfinish'd stuff of nascent worlds
Hither and thither through infinity
Of light and darkness, strangely intermix'd;
Wherein all entity had consciousness,

Without th' accustom'd outward shape of life.
Of these swift circling currents was my soul,
Free from the flesh, a true constituent part;
Nor felt I less myself, for want of form.
Then clear'd the mist, and o'er a star-strown scene
Divine and measureless, I gaz'd in awe.
Alone in space, I view'd a feeble fleck
Of silvern light, marking the narrow ken
Which mortals call the boundless universe.
On ev'ry side, each as a tiny star,
Shone more creations, vaster than our own,
And teeming with unnumber'd forms of life;
Though we as life would recognize it not,
Being bound to earthy thoughts of human mould.
As on a moonless night the Milky Way
In solid sheen displays its countless orbs
To weak terrestrial eyes, each orb a sun;
So beam'd the prospect on my wond'ring soul;
A spangled curtain, rich with twinkling gems,
Yet each a mighty universe of suns.
But as I gaz'd, I sens'd a spirit voice
In speech didactic, though no voice it was,
Save as it carried thought. It bade me mark
That all the universes in my view
Form'd but an atom in infinity;
Whose reaches pass the ether-laden realms
Of heat and light, extending to far fields
Where flourish worlds invisible and vague,
Fill'd with strange wisdom and uncanny life,
And yet beyond; to myriad spheres of light,
To spheres of darkness, to abysmal voids
That know the pulses of disorder'd force.
Big with these musings, I survey'd the surge
Of boundless being, yet I us'd not eyes,

For spirit leans not on the props of sense.
The docent presence swell'd my strength of soul;
All things I knew, but knew with mind alone.
Time's endless vista spread before my thought
With its vast pageant of unceasing change
And sempiternal strife of force and will;
I saw the ages flow in stately stream
Past rise and fall of universe and life;
I saw the birth of suns and worlds, their death,
Their transmutation into limpid flame,
Their second birth and second death, their course
Perpetual through the aeons' termless flight,
Never the same, yet born again to serve
The varying purpose of omnipotence.
And whilst I watch'd, I knew each second's space
Was greater than the lifetime of our world.
Then turn'd my musings to that speck of dust
Whereon my form corporeal took its rise;
That speck, born but a second, which must die
In one brief second more; that fragile earth;
That crude experiment; that cosmic sport
Which holds our proud, aspiring race of mites
And moral vermin; those presuming mites
Whom ignorance with empty pomp adorns,
And misinstructs in specious dignity;
Those mites who, reas'ning outward, vaunt themselves
As the chief work of Nature, and enjoy
In fatuous fancy the particular care
Of all her mystic, super-regnant pow'r.
And as I strove to vision the sad sphere
Which lurk'd, lost in ethereal vortices;
Methought my soul, tun'd to the infinite,
Refus'd to glimpse that poor atomic blight;
That misbegotten accident of space;

That globe of insignificance, whereon
(My guide celestial told me) dwells no part
Of empyreal virtue, but where breed
The coarse corruptions of divine disease;
The fest'ring ailments of infinity;
The morbid matter by itself call'd man:
Such matter (said my guide) as oft breaks forth
On broad Creation's fabric, to annoy
For a brief instant, ere assuaging death
Heal up the malady its birth provok'd.
Sicken'd, I turn'd my heavy thoughts away.
Then spake th' ethereal guide with mocking mien,
Upbraiding me for searching after Truth;
Visiting on my mind the searing scorn
Of mind superior; laughing at the woe
Which rent the vital essence of my soul.
Methought he brought remembrance of the time
When from my fellows to the grove I stray'd,
In solitude and dusk to meditate
On things forbidden, and to pierce the veil
Of seeming good and seeming beauteousness
That covers o'er the tragedy of Truth,
Helping mankind forget his sorry lot,
And raising Hope where Truth would crush it down.
He spake, and as he ceas'd, methought the flames
Of fuming Heav'n revolv'd in torments dire;
Whirling in maelstroms of rebellious might,
Yet ever bound by laws I fathom'd not.
Cycles and epicycles of such girth
That each a cosmos seem'd, dazzled my gaze
Till all a wild phantasmal glow became.
Now burst athwart the fulgent formlessness
A rift of purer sheen, a sight supernal,
Broader than all the void conceiv'd by man,

Yet narrow here. A glimpse of heav'ns beyond;
Of weird creations so remote and great
That ev'n my guide assum'd a tone of awe.
Borne on the wings of stark immensity,
A touch of rhythm celestial reach'd my soul;
Thrilling me more with horror than with joy.
Again the spirit mock'd my human pangs,
And deep revil'd me for presumptuous thoughts;
Yet changing now his mien, he bade me scan
The wid'ning rift that clave the walls of space;
He bade me search it for the ultimate;
He bade me find the truth I sought so long;
He bade me brave th' unutterable Thing,
The final Truth of moving entity.
All this he bade and offer'd—but my soul,
Clinging to life, fled without aim or knowledge,
Shrieking in silence through the gibbering deeps.

* * *

Thus shriek'd the young Lucullus, as he fled
Through gibbering deeps—and tumbled out of bed;
Within the room the morning sunshine gleams,
Whilst the poor youth recalls his troubled dreams.
He feels his aching limbs, whose woeful pain
Informs his soul his body lives again,
And thanks his stars—or cosmoses—or such—
That he survives the noxious nightmare's clutch.
Thrill'd with the music of th' eternal spheres,
(Or is it the alarm-clock that he hears?)
He vows to all the Pantheon, high and low,
No more to feed on cake, or pie, or Poe.
And now his gloomy spirits seem to rise,
As he the world beholds with clearer eyes;

The cup he thought too full of dregs to quaff,
Affords him wine enough to raise a laugh.
(All this is metaphor—you must not think
Our late Endymion prone to stronger drink!)
With brighter visage and with lighter heart,
He turns his fancies to the grocer's mart;
And strange to say, at last he seems to find
His daily duties worthy of his mind.
Since Truth prov'd such a high and dang'rous goal,
Our bard seeks one less trying to his soul;
With deep-drawn breath he flouts his dreary woes,
And a good clerk from a bad poet grows!
Now close attend my lay, ye scribbling crew
That bay the moon in numbers strange and new;
That madly for the spark celestial bawl
In metres short or long, or none at all;
Curb your rash force, in numbers or at tea,
Nor over-zealous for high fancies be;
Reflect, ere ye the draught Pierian take,
What worthy clerks or plumbers ye might make;
Wax not too frenzied in the leaping line
That neither sense nor measure can confine,
Lest ye, like young Lucullus Languish, groan
Benath Poe-etic nightmares of your own!

LAMENT FOR THE VANISHED SPIDER

Dear humble friend in labour and in play,
Say to what region thou has fled away!
Week after week thy busy life was spent
Within these classic walls in calm content.
Thy noble patience, like the Muse's beams,
Inspir'd my efforts, and adorn'd my themes;

Till I had grown to hold thee as a guide,
To all my hopes and ventures close ally'd
How well my thoughts thy talents could engage!
How shone thy magic on the Tryout's page!
Tho' calm thy manner, and thy speeches brief,
Well might I call thee Editor-in-Chief!
Shall any say thy place was slight or low,
Or doubt the lustre of thy heav'nly glow?
Let such consider with observant eye
The annals of the myraid years gone by.
A spider 'twas that rescu'd Islam's head
When from the foe within a cave he fled;
Nor can proud Scotia venture to despise
The lowly beast that help'd her monarch rise.
Ev'n the curs'd Hun must speak with bated breath
Of him who sav'd old Frederick from death;
In short, we find the spider thron'd in state;
Friend of the Nine, and guardian of the great!
But thou, tried comrade of my busy hours—
Whither hast crept with all thy magic pow'rs?
Hath some strange vision of thy spider-brain
Mov'd thee to quit our sordid sphere of pain?
Warm was thy home, and well-arrang'd thy lair;
Thy meat and drink supply'd with tender care;
Were juicy flies too few and far between,
Or was aught lacking in the kerosene?
Sadly I view thy vacant dwelling-place—
Thou transient trav'ler of an ancient race!
Would that I might, with Fancy's curious pow'r
Trace thy meanderings to thy hidden bow'r;
Mark ev'ry secret step, and see thee stand
A sceptred potentate of spider-land!
What wonders unsuspected may exist
In those far provinces of web and mist!

Gossamer castles with their moats of dew;
 And fairy palaces too small to view;
 Or is thine Empire of a darker kind—
 Some bury'd spot the world hath left behind?
 Own'st thou some temple, where thy strands embrace
 The crumbling substance of a Pharaoh's face,
 Or some black crypt beneath the shifting sand
 Where a forgotten city us'd to stand?
 In Tyre and Carthage, Babylon and Ur.
 Luxor and Karnak, do thy legions stir;
 For thee and such as thou the world was made—
 Thy reign commences when our own's decay'd.
 Down immemorial steps, to man unknown,
 Thy spinning tribes drape many a gilded throne;
 Ram-headed gods; objects too dark to name,
 Altars that bore of old an impious flame,
 Wing'd shadowy lions wrought of rock and brass,
 And all the treasures despots can amass—
 These thy dominions, vanish'd wand'ring one
 Who lately bask'd 'neath Haverhill's bright sun!
 But whilst I mourn, or thro' my fancy grope,
 Within my heart bestirs a thrill of hope:
 For bounteous Pan, who rules the vernal wold
 Can oft restore the blessings lost of old:
 Content I'll wait, and trust that he will bring
 My faithful spider with returning Spring!

REGNAR LODBRUG'S EPICEDIUM

(An 8th Century Funeral Song . . .
 Translated from Olaus Wormius)

With our swords have we contended!
 Come but new to Gothland's shore

For the killing of the serpent
 We have gain'd from Thor ()
 ()
 From this deed they call me man
 Because I have transfix'd the adder:
 Shaggy Breeches from that slaughter.
 ()
 I have thrust a spear into the serpent
 With metal brighter ()

With our swords have we contended!
 But a youth was I when eastward
 In the channel of Oreon
 With our foeman's gore in torrents
 We the () and wolves delighted;
 And the yellow-footed buzzard.
 There the harden'd steel resounded
 On the high-wrought hostile helmets.
 One vast wound was all the ocean
 And the hungry raven waded
 Searching for its carrion food
 Deep in dead men's thick'ning blood.

With our swords have we contended!
 Ere two score of years we counted .
 High we bore our glist'ning lances
 Wide we heard our fame and praises.
 In the east before the harbour
 (Barons eight we overcame;)
 We the rav'ning eagle glutted;
 Dripping wounds fill'd up the ocean.
 Weary of the hopeless fray,
 All the host dissolved away

With our swords have we contended!
 When the Vistula we enter'd
 With our ships in battle order
 We unto the hall of Woden
 Sent the bold Helsingian foemen.
 Then the sword-points bit in fury;
 All the billows turn'd to life-blood
 Earth with streaming gore was crimson'd;
 Reeking sword with ringing note
 Shields divided; armour smote.

(With our swords have we contended!)
 (None had fallen on that day)
 (Till on his ship Heraucus fell:)
 (Than him before no braver baron)
 Cleft the sea with ships of battle;
 Never after him was chieftain
 Lighter hearted in the fighting.

With our swords have we contended!
 Now the host flung down their buckles;
 Flying spears tore hero's bosoms
 Swords on Scarfian rocks were striking.
 Gory was his shield in slaughter
 Till the royal Rofus perish'd.
 Sweat from weary hands and pale
 Trickled down the suits of mail.

With our swords have we contended!
 Copious booty had the ravens
 Round about the Indirian islands,
 In that single day of action
 (One in many deaths was little.)

(The rising sun grew bright on spears)
 In the forms of prostrate warrior-men.
 Arrows from their bows ejected;
 (Weapons roared on Lano's plain.)
 (Long the virgin mourned that slaughter.)

LITTLE SAM PERKINS

The ancient garden seems at night
 A deeper gloom to bear,
 As if some silent shadow's blight
 Were hov'ring in the air.

With hidden griefs the grasses sway,
 Unable quite to word them—
 Remembering from yesterday
 The little paws that stirred them.

DRINKING SONG from THE TOMB

Come hither, my lads, with your tankards of ale,
 And drink to the present before it shall fail;
 Pile each on your platter a mountain of beef,
 For 'tis eating and drinking that brings us relief:
 So fill up your glass,
 For life will soon pass;
 When you're dead ye'll ne'er drink to your king or your lass!

Anacreon had a red nose, so they say;
 But what's a red nose if ye're happy and gay?
 Gad split me! I'd rather be red whilst I'm here,
 Than white as a lily—and dead half a year!

So Betty, my miss,
Come give us a kiss;
In hell there's no innkeeper's daughter like this!

Young Harry, propp'd up just as straight as he's able,
Will soon lose his wig and slip under the table;
But fill up your goblets and pass 'em around—
Better under the table than under the ground!

So revel and chaff
As ye thirstily quaff:
Under six feet of dirt 'tis less easy to laugh!

The fiend strike me blue! I'm scarce able to walk,
And damn me if I can stand upright or talk!
Here, landlord, bid Betty to summon a chair;
I'll try home for a while, for my wife is not there!

So lend me a hand;
I'm not able to stand,
But I'm gay whilst I linger on top of the land!

THE ANCIENT TRACK

THE ANCIENT TRACK

There was no hand to hold me back
That night I found the ancient track
Over the hill, and strained to see
The fields that teased my memory.
This tree, that wall—I knew them well,
And all the roofs and orchards fell
Familiarly upon my mind
As from a past not far behind.
I knew what shadows would be cast
When the late moon came up at last
From back of Zaman's Hill, and how
The vale would shine three hours from now.
And when the path grew steep and high,
And seemed to end against the sky,
I had no fear of what might rest
Beyond that silhouetted crest.
Straight on I walked, while all the night
Grew pale with phosphorescent light,
And wall and farmhouse gable glowed
Unearthly by the climbing road.
There was the milestone that I knew—
"Two miles to Dunwich"—now the view
Of distant spire and roofs would dawn
With ten more upward paces gone. . . .

There was no hand to hold me back
That night I found the ancient track,
And reached the crest to see outspread
A valley of the lost and dead:
And over Zaman's Hill the horn
Of a malignant moon was born,

To light the weeds and vines that grew
On ruined walls I never knew.
The fox-fire glowed in field and bog,
And unknown waters spewed a fog
Whose curling talons mocked the thought
That I had ever known this spot.
Too well I saw from the mad scene
That my loved past had never been—
Nor was I now upon the trail
Descending to that long dead vale.
Around was fog—ahead, the spray
Of star-streams in the Milky Way. . . .
There was no hand to hold me back
That night I found the ancient track.

THE EIDOLON

'Twas at a nameless hour of night
When fancies in delirious flight
About the silent sleeper reel
And through his mindless visions steal;
When flesh upon its earthly bed
Sprawls corpse-like and untenanted—
Vacant of soul, which freely flies
Through worlds unknown to waking eyes.
The horned moon above the spire
With ghastly grace was crawling high'r,
And in the pallid struggling beams
Grinned memories of ancient dreams.
Aloft in heaven each starry sign
Flickered fantastic and malign,
Whilst voices from the gaping deep
Bade me assuage my woes in sleep.

This scene, one night in chill November,
I shall through many a year remember.
Beneath another moon I spied
A bleak and barren countryside,
Where spectral shadows darkly crept
O'er moorland mounds where dead things slept.
The beckoning moonlight wanly played
On forms unusual and ill-made,
Aërial forms from strange dominions,
Hither and thither borne on pinions
That fluttered as in feverish quest
Of some far land of light and rest.
In this dark throng my sight could trace
Beings from all ethereal space;
A sentient chaos gathered here
From every immemorial sphere,
Yet of one mind, with ardour rife
To find the Eidolon call'd LIFE.
The murky moon, a daemon eye
Drunkenly winking in the sky,
Flew on and on above the plain
And drew my spirit in its train.
I saw a mountain, coronate
With cities populous and great,
Whose inhabitants, a mighty number,
Lay hid in deep nocturnal slumber,
So that the moon for long dim hours
Leered on lone streets and silent towers.
Fair beyond words the mountain stood,
Its base encircled by a wood;
Adown its side a brooklet bright
Ran dancing in the spectral light.
Each city that adorned its crest
Seemed anxious to outvie the rest,

For craven columns, domes, and fanes
Gleamed rich and lovely o'er the plains
And now the moon in heaven stood still
As if no more foreboding ill,
Whereat the throngs ærial knew
That LIFE at last was in their view;
That the fair mount each gazed upon
Was LIFE, the long-sought Eidolon!
But lo! what rays the scene illumine
As dawn intrudes upon the gloom?
The East is hideous with a flare
Of blood-hued light—a garish glare—
While ghastly grey the mountain stands,
The terror of the neighbouring lands.
The cursed wood of twisted trees
Waves awful talons in the breeze,
And down the slope the oozing stream
Reflects the day with shocking gleam.
Aloft the light of knowledge crawls,
Staining the crumbling city walls
Through which in troops ungainly squirm
The foetid lizard and the worm.
While leprous marble in the light
Shews sculptures that repel and fright,
And many a temple hints the sin
And blasphemy that reign within.
"O Powers of Light and Space and Aidenn,
"Is LIFE with such foul horrors laden?
"Pray hide no more the wondrous plan,
"But shew the living glory—Man!"
Now on the streets the houses spew
A loathesome pestilence, a crew
Of things I cannot, dare not name,
So vile their form, so black their shame.

And in the sky the leering sun
Laughs at the havock he hath done,
Nor pities the vague forms that flee
Back to the Night eternally.
"O Moonlit, Mound-marked Moor of DEATH,
"Renew thy reign! Thy lethal breath
"Is balm elysian to the soul
"That sees the light and knows the whole."
I sought to join the winged train
That plunged into the dusk again,
But Horror, eating at my mind,
Held my poor falt'ring steps behind.
In dreams I fain would flee the day—
Too late, for I have lost the way!

THE NIGHTMARE LAKE

There is a lake in distant Zan,
Beyond the wonted haunts of man,
Where broods alone in hideous state
A spirit dead and desolate;
A spirit ancient and unholy,
Heavy with fearsome melancholy,
Which from the waters dull and dense
Draws vapours curst with pestilence.
Around the banks, a mire of clay,
Sprawl things offensive in decay,
And curious birds that reach that shore
Are seen by mortals nevermore.
Here shines by day the searing sun
On glassy wastes beheld by none,
And here by night pale moonbeams flow
Into the deeps that yawn below.

In nightmares only is it told
 What scenes beneath those beams unfold;
 What scenes, too old for human sight,
 Lie sunken there in endless night;
 For in those depths there only pace
 The shadows of a voiceless race.



. . . lethal shades of upper space
 Howled at the moon's sardonic face.—*The Nightmare Lake*

One midnight, redolent of ill,
 I saw that lake, asleep and still;
 While in the lurid sky there rode
 A gibbous moon that glowed and glowed.
 I saw the stretching marshy shore,
 And the foul things those marshes bore;
 Lizards and snakes convulsed and dying;
 Ravens and vampires putrefying;
 All these, and hovering o'er the dead,
 Necrophagi that on them fed.

And as the dreadful moon climbed high,
Frightening the stars from out the sky,
I saw the lake's dull water glow
Till sunken things appeared below.
There shone, unnumbered fathoms down,
The towers of a forgotten town;
The tarnished domes and mossy walls;
Weed-tangled spires and empty halls;
Deserted fanes and vaults of dread,
And streets of gold uncoveted.
These I beheld, and saw beside
A horde of shapeless shadows glide;
A noxious horde which to my glance
Seemed moving in a hideous dance
Round slimy sepulchres, that lay
Besides a never-travelled way.
Straight from those tombs a heaving rose
That vexed the waters' dull repose,
While lethal shades of upper space
Howled at the moon's sardonic face.
Then sank the lake within its bed,
Sucked down to caverns of the dead,
Till from the reeking, new stript earth
Curled foetid fumes of noisome birth.
About the city, nigh uncovered,
The monstrous dancing shadows hovered,
When lo! there opened with sudden stir
The portal of each sepulchre!
No ear may learn; no tongue may tell
What nameless horror then befell.
I see that lake—that moon agrin—
That city and the *things* within—
Waking, I pray that on that shore
The nightmare lake may sink *no more!*

THE OUTPOST

When evening cools the yellow stream,
And shadow stalks the jungle's ways,
Zimbabwe's palace flares ablaze
For a great King who fears to dream.



Here was no dead ruined seat of man.—*The Outpost*

Foe he alone of all mankind
Waded the swamp that serpents shun;
And struggling toward the setting sun,
Came on the veldt that lies behind.

No other eyes had ventured there
 Since eyes were lent for human sight—
 But there, as sunset turned to night,
He found the Elder Secret's lair.

Strange turrets rose beyond the plain,
 And walls and bastions spread around
 The distant domes that fouled the ground
Like leprous fungi after rain.

A grudging moon writhed up to shine
 Past leagues where life can have no home;
 And paling far-off tower and dome,
Shewed each unwindowed and malign.

Then he who in his boyhood ran
 Through vine-hung ruins free from fear,
 Trembled at what he saw—for here
Was no dead, ruined seat of man.

Inhuman shapes, half-seen, half-guessed,
 Half solid and half ether-spawned,
 Seethed down from starless voids that yawned
In heav'n, to these blank walls of pest.

And voidward from that pest-mad zone
 Amorphous hordes seethed darkly back,
 Their dim claws laden with the wrack
Of things that men have dreamed and known.

The ancient Fishers from Outside—
 Were there not tales the high-priest told,
 Of how they found the worlds of old,
And took what pelf their fancy spied?

Their hidden, dread-ringed outposts brood
Upon a million worlds of space;
Abhorred by every living race,
Yet scatheless in their solitude.

Sweating with fright, the watcher crept
Back to the swamp that serpents shun,
So that he lay, by rise of sun,
Safe in the palace where he slept.

None saw him leave, or come at dawn,
Nor does his flesh bear any mark
Of what he met in that curst dark—
Yet from his sleep all peace has gone.

When evening cools the yellow stream,
And shadow stalks the jungle's ways,
Zimbabwe's palace flares ablaze
For a great King who fears to dream.

THE RUTTED ROAD

Bleak autumn mists send down their chilling load,
A raven shivers as he flutters by;
Through lonely pastures winds the rutted road
Whose bordering elms loom bare against the sky.

Those deep-sunk tracks, which dumbly point ahead
O'er travelled sands that stretch to Vision's rim,
Wake hidden thoughts—a longing half a dread—
Till fancy pauses at the prospect dim.

Descending shadows bid me haste along
The ancient ruts so many knew before;
A cricket mocks me with his mirthless song—
I fear the path—I fain would see no more!

Yet here, with ox-drawn cart, each thoughtless swain
His course pursued, nor left the common way;
Can I, superior to the rustic train,
On brighter by-roads find the dawning day?

With questing look I scan the darkening moor;
Perchance o'er yonder mound all blessings wait;
But still the rutted road's resistless lure
Constrains my progress to the path of fate.

So must I grope between the brooding trees
Where those before me found the mystic night;
I travel onward, past the withered leas—
But what, beyond the bend, awaits my sight?

Do fairer lands than this invite my feet?
Will Fate on me her choicest boons bestow?
What lies ahead, my weary soul to greet?
Why is it that I do not wish to know?

THE WOOD

They cut it down, and where the pitch-black aisles
Of forest night had hid eternal things,
They scaled the sky with towers and marble piles
To make a city for their revellings.

White and amazing to the lands around
That wondrous wealth of domes and turrets rose;
Crystal and ivory, sublimely crowned
With pinnacles that bore unmelting snows.

And through its halls the pipe and sistrum rang,
While wine and riot brought their scarlet stains;
Never a voice of elder marvels sang,
Nor any eye called up the hills and plains.

Thus down the years, till on one purple night
A drunken minstrel in his careless verse
Spoke the vile words that should not see the light,
And stirred the shadows of an ancient curse.

Forests may fall, but not the dusk they shield;
So on the spot where that proud city stood,
The shuddering dawn no single stone revealed,
But fled the blackness of a primal wood.

THE HOUSE

'Tis a grove-circled dwelling
Set close to a hill,
Where the branches are telling
Strange legends of ill;
Over timbers so old
That they breathe of the dead,
Crawl the vines, green and cold,
By strange nourishment fed;
And no man knows the juices they suck
from the depths of their dank slimy bed.

In the gardens are growing
Tall blossoms and fair,
Each pallid bloom throwing
Perfume on the air;
But the afternoon sun
With its red slanting rays
Makes the picture loom dun
On the curious gaze,
And above the sweet scent of the blossoms
 rise odours of numberless days.

The rank grasses are waving
On terrace and lawn,
Dim memories saving
Of things that have gone;
The stones of the walks
Are encrusted and wet,
And a strange spirit stalks
When the red sun has set.
And the soul of the watcher is fill'd
 with faint pictures he fain would forget.

It was in the hot June-time
I stood by that scene
When the gold rays of noon-time
Beat bright on the green.
But I shiver'd with cold,
Groping feebly for light,
As a picture unroll'd—
And my age-spanning sight
Saw the time I had been there before
 flash like fulgury out of the night.

THE CITY

It was golden and splendid,
That City of light;
A vision suspended
In deeps of the night;
A region of wonder and glory, whose temples were marble
and white.

I remember the season
It dawn'd on my gaze;
The mad time of unreason,
The brain-numbing days
When Winter, white-sheeted and ghastly, stalks onward
to torture and craze.

More lovely than Zion
It shone in the sky
When the beams of Orion
Beclouded my eye,
Bringing sleep that was filled with dim mem'ries of
moments obscure and gone by.

Its mansions were stately,
With carvings made fair,
Each rising sedately
On terraces rare,
And the gardens were fragrant and bright with strange
miracles blossoming there.

The avenues lur'd me
With vistas sublime;
Tall arches assur'd me
That once on a time
I had wander'd in rapture beneath them, and bask'd in
the Halcyon clime.

On the plazas were standing
A sculptur'd array;
Long bearded, commanding,
Grave men in their day—
But one stood dismantled and broken, its bearded face
battered away.

In that city effulgent
No mortal I saw,
But my fancy, indulgent
To memory's law,
Linger'd long on the forms in the plazas, and eyed their
stone features with awe.

I fann'd the faint ember
That glow'd in my mind,
And strove to remember
The aeons behind;
To rove thro' infinity freely, and visit the past unconfined.

Then the horrible warning
Upon my soul sped
Like the ominous morning
That rises in red,
And in panic I flew from the knowledge of terrors
forgotten and dead.

HALLOWE'EN IN A SUBURB

The steeples are white in the wild moonlight,
And the trees have a silver glare;
Past the chimneys high see the vampires fly,
And the harpies of upper air,
That flutter and laugh and stare.

For the village dead to the moon outspread
Never shone in the sunset's gleam,
But grew out of the deep that the dead years keep
Where the rivers of madness stream
Down the gulfs to a pit of dream.

A chill wind weaves through the rows of sheaves
In the meadows that shimmer pale,
And comes to twine where the headstones shine
And the ghouls of the churchyard wail
For harvests that fly and fail.

Not a breath of the strange grey gods of change
That tore from the past its own
Can quicken this hour, when a spectral power
Spreads sleep o'er the cosmic throne,
And looses the vast unknown.

So here again stretch the vale and plain
That moons long-forgotten saw,
And the dead leap gay in the pallid ray,
Sprung out of the tomb's black maw
To shake all the world with awe.

And all that the morn shall greet forlorn,
The ugliness and the pest
Of rows where thick rise the stone and brick,
Shall some day be with the rest,
And brood with the shades unblest.

Then wild in the dark let the lemurs bark,
And the leprous spires ascend;
For new and old alike in the fold
Of horror and death are penned,
For the hounds of Time to rend.

PRIMAVERA

There is wonder on land and billow,
And a strangeness in bough and vein,
For the brook and the budded willow
Feel the Presence walking again.
It has come in the olden fashion,
As the tritest of lutes have sung,
But it carries the olden passion
That can never be aught but young.

There are whispers from groves auroral
To blood half-afraid to hear,
While the evening stars' faint choral
Is an ecstasy touched with fear.
And at night where the hill-wraiths rally
Glow the far Walpurgis flame,
Which the lonely swain in the valley
Beholds, though he dare not name.

And in every wild breeze falling
Out of spaces beyond the sky,
There are ancient voices calling
To regions remote and high;
To the gardens of elfin glory
That lie o'er the purple seas,
And mansions of dream and story
From childhood memories.

I am called where the still dawns glitter
On pastures and furrowed crests,
And the thrush and the wood-lark twitter
Low over their brookside nests;

Where the smoke of the cottage hovers,
And the elm-buds promise their shade,
And a carpet of new green covers
The floor of the forest glade.

I am called where the vales are dreaming
In golden, celestial light,
With the gables of castles gleaming,
And village roofs steep and bright;
With distant spires set slimly
Over tangles of twining boughs,
And a ribbon of river seen dimly
Through fields that the farmer ploughs.

I am called where a twilight ocean
Laps the piers of an ancient town,
And dream-ships in ghostly motion
Ride at anchor up and down;
Where sea-lanes narrow and bending
Climb steep through the fragrant gloom
Of chimneys and gambrels blending
With orchard branches in bloom.

And when o'er the waves enchanted
The moon and the stars appear,
I am haunted—haunted—haunted—
By dreams of a mystic year;
Of a year long lost in the dawning,
When the planets were vague and pale,
And the chasms of space were yawning
To vistas that fade and fail.

I am haunted by recollections
Of lands that were not of earth,
Of places where mad perfections
In horror were brought to birth;

Where pylons of onyx mounted
To heavens with fire embowered,
And turrets and domes uncounted
O'er the terraced torrents towered.

I am called to these reachless regions
In tones that are old and known,
By a chorus of phantom legions
That must have been once my own—
But the spell is a charm swift-fleeting,
And the earth has a potent thrall,
So I never have known the freeing,
Or heeded the springtime's call.

OCTOBER

Mellow-faced, with eyes of faery, wistful clad in tinted leaves,
See the brown October tarry by the golden rows of sheaves;
Oak and acorn in his garland, fruit and wineskin in his hands,
Mystic pilgrim from a far land down the road to farther lands.

Softly treading, gently breathing, casting spells on wood and wold,
Vines with purple clusters wreathing, witching boughs to red and gold;
Bearing sicklemen their pleasure when the harvest toil is o'er,
And the autumn's garnered treasure lies within the festive door.

Bearing dreams to all who listen as he sounds his elfin horn
Where the crystal vapours glisten past the farther hills at morn;
Where the sunset hovers playing on the teeming cottage yard
Till the cryptic night comes straying in a mitre tall and starred.

Dreams elusive and uncertain, fleeting as the dying year,
Glimpses from behind the curtain, half to cherish, half to fear;
Memories that charm and beckon, vanished scene and vanished face,
Phantoms past the worlds we reckon, reaching from the wells of space.

Mounting as with necromancy, welcome visions hold the sight;
Bygone fields assail the fancy, radiant in a golden light.
Ancient lanes lead cool and bending past remembered farms and byres,
Where the curling smoke ascending tells of happy autumn fires.

I can catch the flaming riot of the oaks and elms I know,
And the breathless ruddy quiet of the sunset's spectral glow;
And the farmhouse chimney peeping through the scarlet maple shade,
And the gorgeous fruits of reaping by the door in order laid.

Greens that red and yellow dapple, tints that match the blazing sky;
Swelling pumpkin, rosy apple, clustered grapes of Tyrian dye;
And behind the orchard reaching where the rolling meadows bide,
I can see the corn-shocks bleaching and the stubble stretching wide.

Skies alive with southward winging, ravens perched on sheaf and stack,
Groves with eager trumpets ringing as the quarry flees the pack;
Swains with nuts and fagots plodding homeward to the twilit garth,
Soon to cluster, warm and nodding, round their cider and their hearth.

Notes of village bells are soaring, peaceful in their vesper tune,
As an eery light comes pouring from the rising hunter's moon;
Wild above the wooded mountains, weirdly shining on the streams,
Yellow floods from haunted fountains, witches dancing in the beams.

Half-seen sights from outer distance, half-heard sounds from other
spheres,
Beat with goblin-born insistence on the spirit's eyes and ears.
Thoughts half thought and yearnings sober, formless as the autumn
smoke,
These thy gifts, obscure October, these the symbols of thy yoke.

Mellow-faced, with eyes of faery, wistful clad in tinted leaves,
See the brown October tarry by the golden rows of sheaves;
Oak and acorn in his garland, fruit and wineskin in his hands,
Mystic pilgrim from a far land down the road to farther lands.

TO A DREAMER

I scan thy features, calm and white
Beneath the single taper's light;
Thy dark-fringed lids, behind whose screen
Are eyes that view not earth's demesne.



Old visions wake . . . as from some demoniac sight . . .—*To a Dreamer*

And as I look, I fain would know
The paths whereon thy dream-steps go,
The spectral realms that thou canst see
With eyes veiled from the world and me.

For I have likewise gazed in sleep
On things my memory scarce can keep,
And from half-knowing long to spy
Again the scenes before thine eye.

I, too, have known the peaks of Thok;
The vales of Pnath, where dream-shapes flock;

The vaults of Zin—and well I trow
Why thou demand'st that taper's glow.

But what is this that subtly slips
Over thy face and bearded lips?
What fear distracts thy mind and heart,
That drops must from thy forehead start?

Old visions wake—thine opening eyes
Gleam black with clouds of other skies,
And as from some demoniac sight
I flee into the haunted night.

DESPAIR

O'er the midnight moorlands crying,
Through the cypress forests sighing,
In the night-wind madly flying,
 Hellish forms with streaming hair;
In the barren branches creaking,
By the stagnant swamp-pools speaking,
Past the shore-cliffs ever shrieking;
 Damn'd daemons of despair.

Once, I think I half remember,
Ere the grey skies of November
Quenched my youth's aspiring ember,
 Lived there such a thing as bliss;
Skies that now are dark were beaming,
Gold and azure, splendid seeming
Till I learned it all was dreaming—
 Deadly drowsiness of Dis.

But the stream of Time, swift flowing,
Brings the torment of half-knowing—

Dimly rushing, blindly going
Past the never-trodden lea;
And the voyager, repining,
Sees the grisly death-fires shining,
Hears the wicked petrel's whining
As he helpless drifts to sea.

Evil wings in ether beating;
Vultures at the spirit eating;
Things unseen forever fleeting
Black against the leering sky.
Ghastly shades of bygone gladness,
Clawing fiends of future sadness,
Mingle in a cloud of madness
Ever on the soul to lie.

Thus the living, lone and sobbing,
In the throes of anguish throbbing,
With the loathsome Furies robbing
Night and noon of peace and rest.
But beyond the groans and grating
Of abhorrent Life, is waiting
Sweet Oblivion, culminating
All the years of fruitless quest.

NEMESIS

Through the ghoul-guarded gateways of slumber,
Past the wan-mooned abysses of night,
I have lived o'er my lives without number,
I have sounded all things with my sight;
And I struggle and shriek ere the daybreak, being
driven to madness with fright.



... driven to madness with fright.—*Nemesis*

I have whirled with the earth at the dawning,
When the sky was a vaporous flame;
I have seen the dark universe yawning
Where the black planets roll without aim,
Where they roll in their horror unheeded, without
knowledge or lustre or name.

I have drifted o'er seas without ending,
Under sinister grey-clouded skies
That the many-forked lightning is rending,
The jewel-decked throne by the Nile;
That resound with hysterical cries;
With the moans of invisible daemons that out of the
green waters rise.

I have plunged like a deer through the arches
Of the hoary primordial grove,
Where the oaks feel the presence that marches
And stalks on where no spirit dares rove,
And I flee from a thing that surrounds me, and leers
through dead branches above.

I have stumbled by cave-riddled mountains
That rise barren and bleak from the plain,
I have drunk of the frog-foetid fountains
That ooze down to the marsh and the main;
And in hot cursed tarns I have seen things I care not
to gaze on again.

I have scanned the vast ivy-clad palace,
I have trod its untenanted hall,
Where the moon rising up from the valleys
Shows the tapestried things on the wall;
Strange figures discordantly woven, that I cannot
endure to recall.

I have peered from the casements in wonder
At the mouldering meadows around,
At the many-roofed village laid under
The curse of a grave-girdled ground;
And from rows of white urn-carven marble I listen
intently for sound.

I have haunted the tombs of the ages,
I have flown on the pinions of fear
Where the smoke-belching Erebus rages;
Where the jokulls loom snow-clad and drear:
And in realms where the sun of the desert consumes
what it never can cheer.

I was old when the Pharaohs first mounted
The jewel-decked throne by the Nile;
I was old in those epochs uncounted
When I, and I only, was vile;
And Man, yet untainted and happy, dwelt in bliss on
the far Arctic isle.

Oh, great was the sin of my spirit,
And great is the reach of its doom;
Not the pity of Heaven can cheer it,
Nor can respite be found in the tomb:
Down the infinite acons come beating the wings of
unmerciful gloom.

Through the ghoul-guarded gateways of slumber,
Past the wan-mooned abysses of night,
I have lived o'er my lives without number
I have sounded all things with my sight;
And I struggle and shriek ere the daybreak, being
driven to madness with fright.

YULE HORROR

There is snow on the ground,
And the valleys are cold,
And a midnight profound
Blackly squats o'er the wold;
But a light on the hilltops half-seen hints of feastings unhallowed
and old.

There is death in the clouds,
There is fear in the night,
For the dead in their shrouds
Hail the sun's turning flight.
And chant wild in the woods as they dance round a Yule-altar fungous
and white.

To no gale of Earth's kind
Sways the forest of oak,
Where the sick boughs entwined
By mad mistletoes choke,
For these pow'rs are the pow'rs of the dark, from the graves of
the lost Druid-folk.

December, 1926

TO MR. FINLAY, UPON HIS DRAWING FOR MR. BLOCH'S
TALE, "THE FACELESS GOD"

In dim abysses pulse the shapes of night,
Hungry and hideous, with strange mitres crowned;
Black pinions beating in fantastic flight
From orb to orb thro' sunless gulfs profound.

None dares to name the cosmos whence they course,
 Or guess the look on each amorphous face,
 Or speak the words that with resistless force
 Would draw them from the hells of outer space.

Yet here upon a page our frightened glance
 Finds monstrous forms no human eye should see;
 Hints of those blasphemies whose countenance
 Spreads death and madness through infinity.
 What limner he who braves black gulfs alone
 And lives to make their alien horrors known?

WHERE ONCE POE WALKED

Eternal brood the shadows on this ground,
 Dreaming of centuries that have gone before;
 Great elms rise solemnly by slab and mound,
 Arch'd high above a hidden world of yore.
 Round all the scene a light of memory plays,
 And dead leaves whisper of departed days,
 Longing for sights and sounds that are no more.

Lonely and sad, a specter glides along
 Aisles where of old his living footsteps fell;
 No common glance discerns him, though his song
 Peals down through time with a mysterious spell.
 Only the few who sorcery's secret know,
 Espy amidst these tombs the shade of Poe.

CHRISTMAS GREETING TO MRS. PHILLIPS GAMWELL—1925

As when a Pigeon loos'd in Realms remote
 Takes instant wing, and seeks his native cote,
 To speed my blessings from a barb'rous clime
 To thee and Providence at Christmas-time.

BRICK ROW

(Old warehouses in South Water Street, Providence, threatened with demolition in the name of aesthetic "progress".)

It is so long they have been standing there—
Red brick, slant roofs, above the harbour's edge;
Chimneys against a fragment of salt air,
And a green hill ascending ledge by ledge.

They fit the place so well—as much a part
As hill or sky. They almost seem to be
Growths of that Nature, wiser than all art,
Which gives us flowers, mountains and the sea.

No one remembers when they did not show
The dawn's bright ingots like an open chest,
Or when, near dusk, they were not there to glow
With hinted wonders from a fire-lashed west.

They are the sills that hold the lights of home;
The links that join us to the years before;
The haven of old questing wraiths that roam
Down long, dim aisles to a familiar shore.

They store the charm that years build, cell by cell
Like coral, from our lives, our past, our land;
Beauty that dreamers know and cherish well,
But hard eyes slight, too dulled to understand.

Symbols of old New England thoughts and ways—
They are the forms that beauty must enfold
Here, where a gayer pomp would vainly blaze
For want of bonds with what our memories hold.

Sometimes at night the stir of wharves and slips
Comes faint and distant from another day,
And the old brick is barred with masts of ships
That crowd as ghosts along the ancient bay.

Bales from Bermuda, towers of Malay teak;
Satins and spices from the Yangtse's mouth;
Lapping of waters, and the half-heard creak
Of ropes and spars that sway against the south.

And from behind, the murmur of old streets,
And curious lanes that climb the steeped hill;
Peals from old belfries—till the day defeats
Phantom and dream, and the faint sounds are still.

It does not seem they ever can be gone;
Or that the hill's old spires could ever trace
Such haunting shapes across a winter's dawn
Without that setting for their slender grace.

So if at last a callous age must tear
These jewels from the old town's quiet dress,
I think the harbour streets will always wear
A puzzled look of wistful emptiness.

And strangers, staring spaciouly along
An ordered green that ponderous pylons frame,
Will always stop to wonder what is wrong,
And miss some vital thing they cannot name.

December 7, 1929

THE MESSENGER

The Thing, he said, would come that night at three
 From the old churchyard on the hill below;
 But crouching by an oak fire's wholesome glow,
 I tried to tell myself it could not be.
 Surely, I mused, it was a pleasantry



The Thing, he said, would come that night at three . . .—*The Messenger*

Devised by one who did not truly know
 The Elder Sign, bequeathed from long ago,
 That sets the fumbling forms of darkness free.
 He had not meant it—no—but still I lit
 Another lamp as starry Leo climbed
 Out of the Seekonk, and a steeple chimed
Three—and the firelight faded, bit by bit.
 Then at the door that cautious rattling came—
 And the mad truth devoured me like a flame!

TO KLARKASH-TON, LORD OF AVEROIGNE*

A time-black tower against dim banks of cloud;
Around its base the pathless, pressing wood.
Shadow and silence, moss and mould, enshroud
Grey, age-fell'd slabs that once as cromlechs stood
No fall of foot, no song of bird awakes
The lethal aisles of sempiternal night,
Tho' oft with stir of wings the dense air shakes,
As in the tower there glows a pallid light.

For here, apart, dwells one whose hands have wrought
Strange eidola that chill the world with fear;
Whose graven runes in tones of dread have taught
What things beyond the star-gulfs lurk and leer.
Dark Lord of Averoigne—whose windows stare
On pits of dream no other gaze could bear!

* Lovecraft's last poem. Writing to E. Hoffmann Price January 11, 1937, a few days more than two months before his death, Lovecraft referred to this poem as "a tribute which sprang to my pen a couple of weeks ago as I considered some of Smith's macabre accomplishments." His illness came upon Lovecraft soon thereafter, and he wrote very little from that time on.

PSYCHOPOMPOS

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I am He who howls in the night;
I am He who moans in the snow;
I am He who hath never seen light;
I am He who mounts from below.

My car is the car of Death;
My wings are the wings of dread;
My breath is the north wind's breath;
My prey are the cold and the dead.

In old Auvergne, when schools were poor and few,
And peasants fancy'd what they scarcely knew,
When lords and gentry shunn'd their monarch's throne
For solitary castles of their own,
There dwelt a man of rank, whose fortress stood
In the hush'd twilight of a hoary wood.
De Blois his name; his lineage high and vast,
A proud memorial of an honor'd past;
But curious swains would whisper now and then
That Sieur De Blois was not as other men.
In person dark and lean, with glossy hair,
And gleaming teeth that he would often bare,
With piercing eye, and stealthy roving glance,
And tongue that clipt the soft, sweet speech of France;
The Sieur was little lov'd and seldom seen,
So close he kept within his own demesne.
The castle servants, few, discreet, and old,
Full many a tale of strangeness might have told;
Wherein their sires and grandsires serv'd before.
Thus gossip rose, as gossip rises best,
When mystery imparts a keener zest;

Seclusion oft the poison tongue attracts,
And scandal prospers on a dearth of facts.
'Twas said, the Sieur had more than once been spy'd
Alone at midnight by the river's side,
With aspect so uncouth, and gaze so strange,
That rustics cross'd themselves to see the change;
Yet none, when press'd, could clearly say or know
Just what it was, or why they trembled so.
De Blois, as rumor whisper'd, fear'd to pray,
Nor us'd his chapel on the Sabbath day;
Howe'er this may have been, 'twas known at least
His household had no chaplain, monk, or priest.
But if the Master liv'd in dubious fame,
Twice fear'd and hated was his noble Dame;
As dark as he, in features wild and proud,
And with a weird supernal grace endow'd,
The haughty mistress scorn'd the rural train
Who sought to learn her source, but sought in vain.
Old women call'd her eyes too bright by half,
And nervous children shiver'd at her laugh;
Richard, the dwarf (whose word had little weight),
Vow'd she was like a serpent in her gait,
Whilst ancient Pierre (the aged often err)
Laid all her husband's mystery to her.
Still more absurd were those odd mutter'd things
That calumny to curious list'ners brings;
Those subtle slanders, told with downcast face,
And muffled voice . . . those tales no man may trace;
Tales that the faith of old wives can command,
Though always heard at sixth or seventh hand.
Thus village legend darkly would imply
That Dame De Blois possess'd an evil eye;
Or going further, furtively suggest
A lurking spark of sorcery in her breast;

Old Mère Allard (herself half witch) once said
The lady's glance work'd strangely on the dead.
So liv'd the pair, like many another two
That shun the crowd, and shrink from public view.
They scorn'd the doubts by ev'ry peasant shown,
And ask'd but one thing . . . to be let alone!

'Twas Candlemas, the dreariest time of year,
With fall long gone, and spring too far to cheer,
When little Jean, the bailiff's son and heir,
Fell sick and threw the doctors in despair.
A child so stout and strong that few would think
An hour might carry him to death's dark brink,
Yet pale he lay, though hidden was the cause,
And Galens search'd in vain through Nature's laws.
But stricken sadness could not quite suppress
The roving thought, or wrinkled grandam's guess:
Though spoke by stealth, 'twas known to half a score
That Dame De Blois rode by the day before;
She had (they said) with glances weird and wild
Paus'd by the gate to view the prattling child,
Nor did they like the smile which seem'd to trace
New lines of evil on her proud, dark face.
These things they whisper'd, when the mother's cry
Told of the end . . . the gentle soul gone by;
In genuine grief the kindly watcher wept,
Whilst the lov'd babe with saints and angels slept.
The village priest his simple rites went through,
And good Michel nail'd up the box of yew;
Around the corpse the holy candles burn'd,
The mourners sighed, the parents dumbly yearn'd.
Then one by one each sought his humble bed,
And left the lonely mother with her dead.

Late in the night it was, when o'er the vale
 The storm king swept with pandemoniac gale;
 Deep pil'd the cruel snow, yet strange to tell,
 The lightning sputter'd while the white flakes fell;
 A hideous presence seem'd abroad to steal,
 And terror sounded in the thunder's peal.
 Within the house of grief the tapers glow'd
 Whilst the poor mother bow'd beneath her load;
 Her salty eyes too tired now to weep,
 Too pain'd to see, too sad to close in sleep.
 The clock struck three, above the tempest heard,
 When something near the lifeless infant stirr'd;
 Some slipp'ry thing, that flopp'd in awkward way,
 And climb'd the table where the coffin lay,
 With scaly convolutions strove to find
 The cold, still clay that death had left behind.
 The nodding mother hears . . . starts broad awake . . .
 Empower'd to reason, yet too stunn'd to shake;
 The pois'nous thing she sees, and nimbly foils
 The ghoulisn purpose of the quiv'ring coils:
 With ready ax the serpent's head she cleaves,
 And thrills with savage triumph whilst she grieves.
 The injur'd reptile hissing glides from sight,
 And hides its cloven carcass in the night.

The weeks slipp'd by, and gossip's tongue began
 To call the *Sieur De Blois* an alter'd man;
 With curious mien he oft would pace along
 The village street, and eye the gaping throng.
 Yet whilst he showed himself as ne'er before,
 His wild-eyed lady was observ'd no more.
 In course of time, 'twas scarce thought odd or ill
 That he his ears with village lore should fill;
 Nor was the town with special rumor rife
 When he sought out the bailiff and his wife:

Their tale of sorrow, with its ghastly end,
Was told, indeed, by ev'ry wond'ring friend
The Sieur heard all, and low'ring rode away,
Nor was he seen again for many a day.

When vernal sunshine shed its cheering glow,
And genial zephyrs blew away the snow,
To frighten'd swains a horror was reveal'd
In the damp herbage of a melting field.
There (half preserved by winter's frigid bed)
Lay the dark Dame De Blois, untimely dead;
By some assassin's stroke most foully slain,
Her shapely brow and temples cleft in twain.
Reluctant hands the dismal burden bore
To the stone arches of the husband's door,
Where silent serfs the ghastly thing receiv'd,
Trembling with fright, but less amaz'd than griev'd;
The Sieur his dame beheld with blazing eyes,
And shook with anger, more than with surprise.
(At least 'tis thus the stupid peasants told
Their wide-mouth'd wives when they the tale unroll'd.)
The village wonder'd why De Blois had kept
His spouse's loss unmention'd and unwept,
Nor were there lacking sland'rous tongues to claim
That the dark master was himself to blame.
But the village talk could scarcely hope to solve
A crime so deep, and thus the months revolve:
The rural train repeat the gruesome tale,
And gape and marvel more than they bewail.

Swift flew the sun, and winter once again
With icy talons gripp'd the frigid plain.
December brought its store of Christmas cheer,
And grateful peasants hail'd the op'ning year;

But by the hearth as Candlemas drew nigh,
The whisp'ring ancients spoke of things gone by.
Few had forgot the dark demoniac lore
Of things that came the Candlemas before,
And many a crone intently ey'd the house
Where dwelt the sadden'd bailiff and his spouse.
At last the day arriv'd, the sky o'erspread
With dark'ning messengers and clouds of lead;
Each neighb'ring grove AEolian warnings sigh'd,
And thick'ning terrors broadcast seem'd to bide.
The good folk, though they knew not why, would run
Swift past the bailiff's door, the scene to shun;
Within the house the grieving couple wept,
And mourn'd the child who now for ever slept.
On rush'd the dusk in doubly hideous form,
Borne on the pinions of the gath'ring storm;
Unusual murmurs fill'd the rainless wind,
And hast'ning travelers fear'd to glance behind.
Mad o'er the hills the demon tempest tore;
The rising river lash'd the troubled shore;
Black through the night the awful storm god prowl'd,
And froze the list'ners' life-blood as he howled;
Gigantic trees like supple rushes sway'd,
Whilst for his home the trembling cotter pray'd.
Now falls a sudden lull amidst the gale;
With less'ning force the circling currents wail;
Far down the stream that laves the neighb'ring mead
Burst a new ululation, wildly key'd;
The peasant train a frantic mien assume,
And huddle closer in the spectral gloom:
To each strain'd ear the truth too well is known,
For each dread sound can come from wolves alone!
The rustics close attend, when ere they think,
A lupine army swarms the river's brink;



With ready ax, the serpent's head she cleaves . . .—*Psychopompos*

From out the waters leap a howling train
That rend the air, and scatter o'er the plain:
With flaming orbs the frothing creatures fly,
And chant with hellish voice their hungry cry.
First of the pack a mighty monster leaps
With fearless tread, and martial order keeps;
Th' attendant wolves his yelping tones obey,
And form in columns for the coming fray:
No frighten'd swain they harm, but silent bound
With a fix'd purpose o'er the frozen ground.
Straight course the monsters through the village street,
Unholy vigour in their flying feet;
Through half-shut blinds the shelter'd peasants peer,
And wax in wonder as they lose in fear.
Th' excited pack at last their goal perceive,
And the vex'd air with deaf'ning clamour cleave;
The churls, astonish'd, watch th' unnatural herd
Flock round a cottage at the leader's word:
Quick spreads the fearsome fact, by rumour blown,
That the doom'd cottage is the bailiff's own!
Round and around the howling demons glide,
Whilst the fierce leader scales the vine-clad side;
The frantic wind its horrid wail renews,
And mutters madly through the leafless yews.
In the frail house the bailiff calmly waits
The rav'ning horde, and trusts th' impartial Fates,
But the wan wife revives with curious mien
Another monster and an older scene;
Amidst th' increasing wind that rocks the walls,
The dame to him the serpent's deed recalls:
Then as a nameless thought fills both their minds,
The bare-fang'd leader crashes through the blinds.
Across the room, with murd'rous fury rife,
Leaps the mad wolf, and seizes on the wife;

With strange intent he drags his shrieking prey
Close to the spot where once the coffin lay.
Wilder and wilder roars the mounting gale
That sweeps the hills and hurtles through the vale;
The ill-made cottage shakes, the pack without
Dance with new fury in demoniac rout.
Quick as his thought, the valient bailiff stands
Above the wolf, a weapon in his hands;
The ready ax that served a year before,
Now serves as well to slay one monster more.
The creature drops inert, with shatter'd head,
Full on the floor, and silent as the dead;
The rescu'd wife recalls the dire alarms,
And faints from terror in her husband's arms.
But as he holds her, all the cottage quakes,
And with full force the titan tempest breaks:
Down crash the walls, and o'er their shrinking forms
Burst the mad revels of the storm of storms.
Th' encircling wolves advance with ghastly pace,
Hunger and murder in each gleaming face,
But as they close, from out the hideous night
Flashes a bolt of unexpected light:
The vivid scene to ev'ry eye appears,
And peasants shiver with returning fears.
Above the wreck the scatheless chimney stays,
Its outline glimm'ring in the fitful rays,
Whilst o'er the hearth still hangs the household shrine,
The Savior's image and the Cross divine!
Round the blest spot a lambent radiance glows,
And shields the cotters from their stealthy foes:
Each monstrous creature marks the wondrous glare,
Drops, fades, and vanishes in empty air!
The village train with startled eyes adore,
And count their beads in rev'rence o'er and o'er.



Th' encircling wolves advance with ghastly pace . . .—*Psychopompos*

Now fades the light, and dies the raging blast,
The hour of dread and reign of horror past.
Pallid and bruis'd, from out his toppled walls
The panting bailiff with his good wife crawls:
Kind hands attend them, whilst o'er all the town
A strange sweet peace of spirit settles down.
Wonder and fear are still'd in soothing sleep,
As through the breaking clouds the moon rays peep.

Here paus'd the prattling grandam in her speech,
Confus'd with age, the tale half our of reach;
The list'ning guest, impatient for a clue,
Fears 'tis not one tale, but a blend of two;
He fain would know how far'd the widow'd lord
Whose eery ways th' initial theme afford,
And marvels that the crone so quick should slight
His fate, to babble of the wolf-rack'd night.
The old wife, press'd, for greater clearness strives,
Nods wisely, and her scatter'd wits revives;
Yet strangely lingers on her latter tale
Of wolf and bailiff, miracle and gale.
When (quoth the crone) the dawn's bright radiance bath'd
Th' eventful scene, so late in terror swath'd,
The chatt'ring churls that sought the ruin'd cot
Found a new marvel in the gruesome spot.
From fallen walls a trail of gory red,
As of the stricken wolf, erratic led;
O'er road and mead the new-dript crimson wound,
Till lost amidst the neighb'ring swampy ground:
With wonder unappeas'd the peasants burn'd,
For what the quicksand takes is ne'er return'd

Once more the grandam, with a knowing eye,
Stops in her tale, to watch a hawk soar by;

The weary list'ner, baffled, seeks anew
For some plain statement, or enlight'ning clue.
Th' indulgent crone attends the puzzled plea,
Yet strangely mutters o'er the mystery.
The Sieur? Ah, yes . . . that morning all in vain
His shaking servants scour'd the frozen plain;
No man had seen him since he rode away
In silence on the dark preceding day,
His horse, wild-eyed with some unusual fright,
Came wand'ring from the river bank that night.
His hunting-hound, that mourn'd with piteous woe,
Howl'd by the quicksand swamp, his grief to show.
The village folk thought much, but utter'd less;
The servants' search wore out in emptiness:
For Sieur De Blois (the old wife's tale is o'er)
Was lost to mortal sight forevermore.

FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH

FUNGI FROM YUGGOTH

I. The Book

The place was dark and dusty and half-lost
In tangles of old alleys near the quays,
Reeking of strange things brought in from the seas,
And with queer curls of fog that west winds tossed.
Small lozenge panes, obscured by smoke and frost,
Just showed the books, in piles like twisted trees,
Rotting from floor to roof—congeries
Of crumbling elder lore at little cost.

I entered, charmed, and from a cobwebbed heap
Took up the nearest tome and thumbed it through,
Trembling at curious words that seemed to keep
Some secret, monstrous if one only knew.
Then, looking for some seller old in craft,
I could find nothing but a voice that laughed.

II. Pursuit

I held the book beneath my coat, at pains
To hide the thing from sight in such a place;
Hurrying through the ancient harbour lanes
With often-turning head and nervous pace.
Dull, furtive windows in old tottering brick
Peered at me oddly as I hastened by,
And thinking what they sheltered, I grew sick
For a redeeming glimpse of clean blue sky.

No one had seen me take the thing—but still
A blank laugh echoed in my whirling head,
And I could guess what nighted worlds of ill

Lurked in that volume I had coveted.
The way grew strange—the walls alike and madding—
And far behind me, unseen feet were padding.

III. The Key

I do not know what windings in the waste
Of those strange sea-lanes brought me home once more
But on my porch I trembled, white with haste
To get inside and bolt the heavy door.
I had the book that told the hidden way
Across the void and through the space-hung screens
That hold the undimensioned worlds at bay,
And keep lost aeons to their own demesnes.

At last the key was mine to those vague visions
Of sunset spires and twilight woods that brood
Dim in the gulfs beyond this earth's precisions,
Lurking as Memories of infinitude.
The key was mine, but as I sat there mumbling,
The attic window shook with a faint fumbling.

IV. Recognition

The day had come again, when as a child
I saw—just once—that hollow of old oaks,
Grey with a ground-mist that enfolds and chokes
The slinking shapes which madness has defiled.
It was the same—an herbage rank and wild
Clings round an altar whose carved sign invokes
That Nameless One to whom a thousand smokes
Rose, aeons gone, from unclean towers up-piled.

I saw the body spread on that dank stone,
And knew those things which feasted were not men;
I knew this strange, grey world was not my own,
But Yuggoth, past the starry voids—and then
The body shrieked at me with a dead cry,
And all too late I knew that it was I!

V. Homecoming

The daemon said that he would take me home
To the pale, shadowy land I half-recalled
As a high place of stair and terrace, walled
With marble balustrades that sky-winds comb,
While miles below a maze of dome on dome
And tower on tower beside a sea lies sprawled.
Once more, he told me, I would stand enthralled
On those old heights, and hear the far-off foam.

All this he promised, and through sunset's gate
He swept me, past the lapping lakes of flame,
And red-gold thrones of gods without a name
Who shriek in fear at some impending fate.
Then a black gulf with sea-sounds in the night:
"Here was your home," he mocked, "when you had sight!"

VI. The Lamp

We found the lamp inside those hollow cliffs
Whose chiselled sign no priest in Thebes could read,
And from whose caverns frightened hieroglyphs
Warned every living creature of earth's breed.
No more was there—just that one brazen bowl
With traces of a curious oil within;



No more was there—just that one brazen bowl . . .—*The Lamp*

Fretted with some obscurely patterned scroll,
And symbols hinting vaguely of strange sin.

Little the fears of forty centuries meant
To us as we bore off our slender spoil,
And when we scanned it in our darkened tent
We struck a match to test the ancient oil.
It blazed—great God! . . . But the vast shapes we saw
In that mad flash have seared our lives with awe.

VII. Zaman's Hill

The great hill hung close over the old town,
A precipice against the main street's end;
Green, tall, and wooded, looking darkly down
Upon the steeple at the highway bend.
Two hundred years the whispers had been heard
About what happened on the man-shunned slope—
Tales of an oddly mangled deer or bird,
Or of lost boys whose kin had ceased to hope.

One day the mail-man found no village there,
Nor were its folk or houses seen again;
People came out from Aylesbury to stare—
Yet they all told the mail-man it was plain
That he was mad for saying he had spied
The great hill's gluttonous eyes, and jaws stretched wide.

VIII. The Port

Ten miles from Arkham I had struck the trail
That rides the cliff-edge over Boynton Beach,
And hoped that just at sunset I could reach
The crest that looks on Innsmouth in the vale.



The great hill's gluttonous eyes, and jaws stretched wide.—*Zaman's Hill*

Far out at sea was a retreating sail,
White as hard years of ancient winds could bleach,
But evil with some portent beyond speech,
So that I did not wave my hand or hail.

Sails out of Innsmouth! Echoing old renown
Of long-dead times, but now a too-swift night
Is closing in, and I have reached the height
Whence I so often scan the distant town.
The spires and roofs are there—but look! The gloom
Sinks on dark lanes, as lightless as the tomb!

IX. The Courtyard

It was the city I had known before;
The ancient, leprous town where mongrel throngs
Chant to strange gods, and beat unhallowed gongs
In crypts beneath foul alleys near the shore.
The rotting, fish-eyed houses leered at me
From where they leaned, drunk and half-animate,
As edging through the filth I passed the gate
To the black courtyard where the man would be.

The dark walls closed me in, and loud I cursed
That ever I had come to such a den,
When suddenly a score of windows burst
Into wild light, and swarmed with dancing men:
Mad, soundless revels of the dragging dead—
And not a corpse had either hands or head!

X. The Pigeon-Flyers

They took me slumming, where gaunt walls of brick
Bulge outward with a viscous stored-up evil,
And twisted faces, thronging foul and thick,
Wink messages to alien god and devil.



By what they glimpsed in one bird's evil beak.—*The Pigeon-Flyers*

A million fires were blazing in the streets,
And from flat roofs a furtive few would fly
Bedraggled birds into the yawning sky
While hidden drums droned on with measured beats.

I knew those fires were brewing monstrous things,
And that those birds of space had been *Outside*—
I guessed to what dark planet's crypts they plied,
And what they brought from Thog beneath their wings.
The others laughed—till struck too mute to speak
By what they glimpsed in one bird's evil beak.

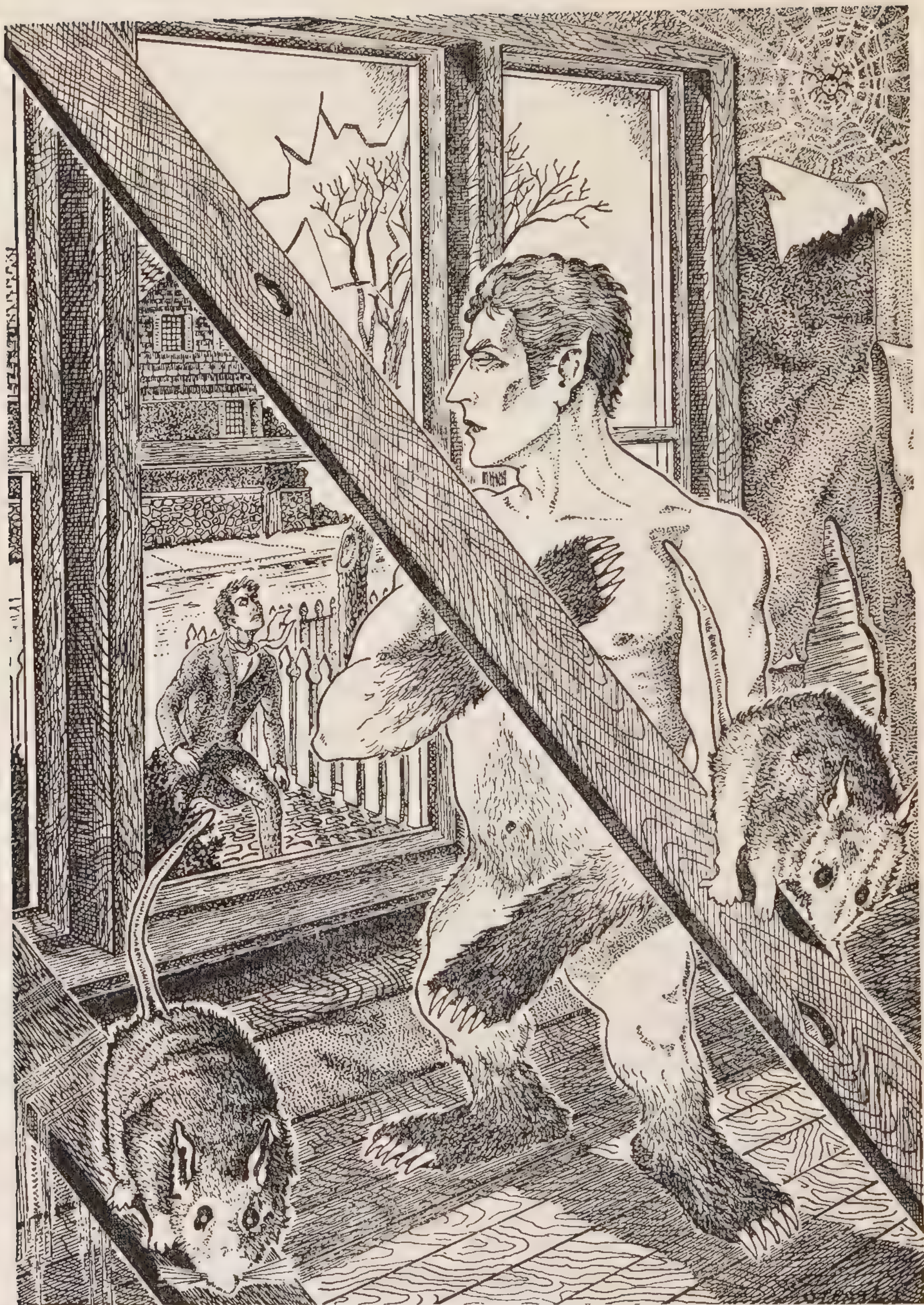
XI. The Well

Farmer Seth Atwood was past eighty when
He tried to sink that deep well by his door,
With only Eb to help him bore and bore.
We laughed, and hoped he'd soon be sane again.
And yet, instead, young Eb went crazy, too,
So that they shipped him to the county farm.
Seth bricked the well-mouth up as tight as glue—
Then hacked an artery in his gnarled left arm.

After the funeral we felt bound to get
Out to that well and rip the bricks away,
But all we saw were iron hand-holds set
Down a black hole deeper than we could say.
And yet we put the bricks back—for we found
The hole too deep for any line to sound.

XII. The Howler

They told me not to take the Briggs' Hill path
That used to be the highroad through to Zoar,
For Goody Watkins, hanged in seventeen-four,
Had left a certain monstrous aftermath.



. . . a four-pawed thing with human face.—*The Howler*

Yet when I disobeyed, and had in view
The vine-hung cottage by the great rock slope,
I could not think of elms or hempen rope,
But wondered why the house still seemed so new.

Stopping a while to watch the fading day,
I heard faint howls, as from a room upstairs,
When through the ivied panes one sunset ray
Struck in, and caught the howler unawares.
I glimpsed—and ran in frenzy from the place,
And from a four-pawed thing with human face.

XIII. Hesperia

The winter sunset, flaming beyond spires
And chimneys half-detached from this dull sphere,
Opens great gates to some forgotten year
Of elder splendours and divine desires.
Expectant wonders burn in those rich fires,
Adventure-fraught, and not untinged with fear;
A row of sphinxes where the way leads clear
Toward walls and turrets quivering to far lyres.

It is the land where beauty's meaning flowers;
Where every unplaced memory has a source;
Where the great river Time begins its course
Down the vast void in starlit streams of hours.
Dreams bring us close—but ancient lore repeats
That human tread has never soiled these streets.

XIV. Star-Winds

It is a certain hour of twilight glooms,
Mostly in autumn, when the star-wind pours
Down hilltop streets, deserted out-of-doors,
But showing early lamplight from snug rooms.

The dead leaves rush in strange, fantastic twists,
And chimney-smoke whirls round with alien grace
Heeding geometries of outer space,
While Fomalhaut peers in through southward mists.

This is the hour when moonstruck poets know
What fungi sprout in Yuggoth, and what scents
And tints of flowers fill Nithon's continents,
Such as in no poor earthly garden blow.
Yet for each dream these winds to us convey,
A dozen more of ours they sweep away!

XV. Antarktos

Deep in my dream the great bird whispered queerly
Of the black cone amid the polar waste;
Pushing above the ice-sheet lone and drearily,
By storm-crazed aeons battered and defaced.
Hither no living earth-shapes take their courses,
And only pale auroras and faint suns
Glow on that pitted rock, whose primal sources
Are guessed at dimly by the Elder Ones.

If men should glimpse it, they would merely wonder
What tricky mound of Nature's build they spied;
But the bird told of vaster parts, that under
The mile-deep ice-shroud crouch and brood and hide.
God help the dreamer whose mad visions show
Those dead eyes set in crystal gulfs below!

XVI. The Window

The house was old, with tangled wings outthrown,
Of which no one could even half keep track,
And in a small room somewhat near the back
Was an odd window sealed with ancient stone.

There, in a dream-plagued childhood, quite alone
I used to go, where night reigned vague and black;
Parting the cobwebs with a curious lack
Of fear, and with a wonder each time grown.

One later day I brought the masons there
To find what view my dim forbears had shunned,
But as they pierced the stone, a rush of air
Burst from the alien voids that yawned beyond.
They fled—but I peered through and found unrolled
All the wild worlds of which my dreams had told.

XVII. A Memory

There were great steppes, and rocky table-lands
Stretching half-limitless in starlit night,
With alien campfires shedding feeble light
On beasts with tinkling bells, in shaggy bands.
Far to the south the plain sloped low and wide
To a dark zigzag line of wall that lay
Like a huge python of some primal day
Which endless time had chilled and petrified.

I shivered oddly in the cold, thin air,
And wondered where I was and how I came,
When a cloaked form against a campfire's glare
Rose and approached, and called me by my name.
Staring at that dead face beneath the hood,
I ceased to hope—because I understood.

XVIII. The Gardens of Yin

Beyond that wall, whose ancient masonry
Reached almost to the sky in moss-thick towers,
There would be terraced gardens, rich with flowers,
And flutter of bird and butterfly and bee.

There would be walks, and bridges arching over
Warm lotus-pools reflecting temple eaves,
And cherry-trees with delicate boughs and leaves
Against a pink sky where the herons hover.

All would be there, for had not old dreams flung
Open the gate to that stone-lanterned maze
Where drowsy streams spin out their winding ways,
Trailed by green vines from bending branches hung?
I hurried—but when the wall rose, grim and great,
I found there was no longer any gate.

XIX. The Bells

Year after year I heard that faint, far ringing
Of deep-toned bells on the black midnight wind;
Peals from no steeple I could ever find,
But strange, as if across some great void winging.
I searched my dreams and memories for a clue,
And thought of all the chimes my visions carried;
Of quiet Innsmouth, where the white gulls tarried
Around an ancient spire that once I knew.

Always perplexed I heard those far notes falling,
Till one March night the bleak rains splashing cold
Beckoned me back through gateways of recalling
To elder towers where the mad clappers tolled.
They tolled—but from the sunless tides that pour
Through sunken valleys on the sea's dead floor.

XX. Night-Gaunts

Out of what crypt they crawl, I cannot tell,
But every night I see the rubbery things,
Black, horned, and slender, with membraneous wings,
And tails that bear the bifid barb of hell.



UTPATEL

... the chimes my vision carried ... of quiet Innsmouth.—*The Bells*

They come in legions on the north wind's swell
With obscene clutch that titillates and stings,
Snatching me off on monstrous voyagings
To grey worlds hidden deep in nightmare's well.

Over the jagged peaks of Thok they sweep,
Heedless of all the cries I try to make,
And down the nether pits to that foul lake
Where the puffed shoggoths splash in doubtful sleep.
But ho! If only they would make some sound,
Or wear a face where faces should be found!

XXI. Nyarlathotep

And at the last from inner Egypt came
The strange dark One to whom the fellahs bowed;
Silent and lean and cryptically proud,
And wrapped in fabrics red as sunset flame.
Throngs pressed around, frantic for his commands,
But leaving, could not tell what they had heard;
While through the nations spread the awestruck word
That wild beasts followed him and licked his hands.

Soon from the sea a noxious birth began;
Forgotten lands with weedy spires of gold;
The ground was cleft, and mad auroras rolled
Down on the quaking citadels of man.
Then, crushing what he chanced to mould in play,
The idiot Chaos blew Earth's dust away.

XXII. Azathoth

Out in the mindless void the daemon bore me,
Past the bright clusters of dimensioned space,

Till neither time nor matter stretched before me,
But only Chaos, without form or place.
Here the vast Lord of All in darkness muttered
Things he had dreamed but could not understand
While near him shapeless bat-things flopped and fluttered
In idiot vortices that ray-streams fanned.

They danced insanely to the high, thin whining
Of a cracked flute clutched in a monstrous paw,
Whence flow the aimless waves whose chance combining
Gives each frail cosmos its eternal law.
“I am His Messenger,” the daemon said,
As in contempt he struck his Master’s head.

XXIII. Mirage

I do not know if ever it existed—
That lost world floating dimly on Time’s stream—
And yet I see it often, violet-misted,
And shimmering at the back of some vague dream.
There were strange towers and curious lapping rivers,
Labyrinths of wonder, and low vaults of light,
And bough-crossed skies of flame, like that which quivers
Wistfully just before a winter’s night.

Great moors led off to sedgy shores unpeopled,
Where vast birds wheeled, while on a windswept hill
There was a village, ancient and white-steepled,
With evening chimes for which I listen still.
I do not know what land it is—or dare
Ask when or why I was, or will be, there.

XXIV. The Canal

Somewhere in dream there is an evil place
Where tall, deserted buildings crowd along
A deep, black, narrow channel, reeking strong
Of frightful things whence oily currents race.
Lanes with old walls half-meeting overhead
Wind off to streets one may or may not know,
And feeble moonlight sheds a spectral glow
Over long rows of windows, dark and dead.

There are no footfalls, and the soft sound
Is of the oily water as it glides
Under stone bridges, and along the sides
Of its deep flume, to some vague ocean bound.
None lives to tell when that stream washed away
Its dream-lost region from the world of clay.

XXV. St. Toad's

"Beware St. Toad's cracked chimes!" I heard him scream
As I plunged into those mad lanes that wind
In labyrinths obscure and undefined
South of the river where old centuries dream.
He was a furtive figure, bent and ragged,
And in a flash had staggered out of sight,
So still I burrowed onward in the night
Toward where more roof-lines rose, malign and jagged.

No guide-book told of what was lurking here—
But now I heard another old man shriek:
"Beward St. Toad's cracked chimes!" And growing weak,
I paused, when a third greybeard croaked in fear:
"Beware St. Toad's cracked chimes!" Aghast, I fled—
Till suddenly that black spire loomed ahead.

XXVI. The Familiars

John Whateley lived about a mile from town,
Up where the hills begin to huddle thick ;
We never thought his wits were very quick,
Seeing the way he let his farm run down.
He used to waste his time on some queer books
He'd found around the attic of his place,
Till funny lines got creased into his face,
And folks all said they didn't like his looks.

When he began those night-howls we declared
He'd better be locked up away from harm,
So three men from the Aylesbury town farm
Went for him—but came back alone and scared.
They'd found him talking to two crouching things
That at their step flew off on great black wings.

XXVII. The Elder Pharos

From Leng, where rocky peaks climb bleak and bare
Under cold stars obscure to human sight,
There shoots at dusk a single beam of light
Whose far blue rays make shepherds whine in prayer.
They say (though none has been there) that it comes
Out of a pharos in a tower of stone,
Where the last Elder One lives on alone,
Talking to Chaos with the beat of drums.

The Thing, they whisper, wears a silken mask
Of yellow, whose queer folds appear to hide
A face not of this earth, though none dares ask
Just what those features are, which bulge inside.
Many, in man's first youth, sought out that glow,
But what they found, no one will ever know.



The Thing, they whisper, wears a silken mask . . .—*The Elder Pharos*

XXVIII. Expectancy

I cannot tell why some things hold for me
A sense of unplumbed marvels to befall,
Or of a rift in the horizon's wall
Opening to worlds where only gods can be.
There is a breathless, vague expectancy,
As of vast ancient pomps I half-recall,
Or wild adventures, uncorporeal,
Ecstasy-fraught, and as a day-dream free.

It is in sunsets and strange city spires,
Old villages and woods and misty downs,
South winds, the sea, low hills, and lighted towns,
Old gardens, half-heard songs, and the moon's fires.
But though its lure alone makes life worth living,
None gains or guesses what it hints at giving.

XXIX. Nostalgia

Once every year, in autumn's wistful glow,
The birds fly out over an ocean waste,
Calling and chattering in a joyous haste
To reach some land their inner memories know.
Great terraced gardens where bright blossoms blow,
And lines of mangoes luscious to the taste,
And temple-groves with branches interlaced
Over cool paths—all these their vague dreams show.

They search the sea for marks of their old shore—
For the tall city, white and turreted—
But only empty waters stretch ahead,
So that at last they turn away once more.
Yet sunken deep where alien polyps throng,
The old towers miss their lost, remembered song.

XXX. Background

I never can be tied to raw, new things,
For I first saw the light in an old town,
Where from my window huddled roofs sloped down
To a quaint harbour rich with visionings.
Streets with carved doorways where the sunset beams
Flooded old fanlights and small window-panes,
And Georgian steeples topped with gilded vanes—
These were the sights that shaped my childhood dreams.

Such treasures, left from times of cautious leaven,
Cannot but loose the hold of flimsier wraiths
That flit with shifting ways and muddled faiths
Across the changeless walls of earth and heaven.
They cut the moment's thongs and leave me free
To stand alone before eternity.

XXXI. The Dweller

It had been old when Babylon was new;
None knows how long it slept beneath that mound,
Where in the end our questing shovels found
Its granite blocks and brought it back to view.
There were vast pavements and foundation-walls,
And crumbling slabs and statues, carved to show
Fantastic beings of some long ago
Past anything the world of man recalls.

And then we saw those stone steps leading down
Through a choked gate of graven dolomite
To some black haven of eternal night
Where elder signs and primal secrets frown.
We cleared a path—but raced in mad retreat
When from below we heard those clumping feet.



And then we saw those stone steps leading down . . .—*The Dweller*

XXXII. Alienation

His solid flesh had never been away,
For each dawn found him in his usual place,
But every night his spirit loved to race
Through gulfs and worlds remote from common day.
He had seen Yaddith, yet retained his mind,
And come back safely from the Ghooric zone,
When one still night across curved space was thrown
That beckoning piping from the voids behind.

He waked that morning as an older man,
And nothing since has looked the same to him.
Objects around float nebulous and dim—
False phantom trifles of some vaster plan.
His folk and friends are now an alien throng
To which he struggles vainly to belong.

XXXIII. Harbour Whistles

Over old roofs and past decaying spires
The harbour whistles chant all through the night;
Throats from strange ports, and beaches far and white,
And fabulous oceans, ranged in motley choirs.
Each to the other alien and unknown,
Yet all, by some obscurely-focussed force
From brooding gulfs beyond the Zodiac's course,
Fused into one mysterious cosmic drone.

Through shadowy dreams they send a marching line
Of still more shadowy shapes and hints and views;
Echoes from outer voids, and subtle clues
To things which they themselves cannot define.
And always in that chorus, faintly blent,
We catch some notes no earth-ship ever sent.

XXXIV. Recapture

The way led down a dark, half-wooded heath
Where moss-grey boulders humped above the mould,
And curious drops, disquieting and cold,
Sprayed up from unseen streams in gulfs beneath.
There was no wind, nor any trace of sound
In puzzling shrub, or alien-featured tree,
Nor any view before—till suddenly,
Straight in my path, I saw a monstrous mound.

Half to the sky those steep sides loomed upspread,
Rank-grassed, and cluttered by a crumbling flight
Of lava stairs that scaled the fear-topped height
In steps too vast for any human tread.
I shrieked—and *knew* what primal star and year
Had sucked me back from man's dream-transient sphere!

XXXV. Evening Star

I saw it from that hidden, silent place
Where the old wood half shuts the meadow in.
It shone through all the sunset's glories—thin
At first, but with a slowly-brightening face.
Night came, and that lone beacon, amber-hued,
Beat on my sight as never it did of old;
The evening star, but grown a thousandfold
More haunting in this hush and solitude.

It traced strange pictures on the quivering air—
Half-memories that had always filled my eyes—
Vast towers and gardens; curious seas and skies
Of some dim life—I never could tell where.
But now I knew that through the cosmic dome
Those rays were calling from my far, lost home.

XXXVI. *Continuity*

There is in certain ancient things a trace
Of some dim essence—more than form or weight;
A tenuous aether, indeterminate,
Yet linked with all the laws of time and space.
A faint, veiled sign of continuities
That outward eyes can never quite descry;
Of locked dimensions harbouring years gone by,
And out of reach except for hidden keys.

It moves me most when slanting sunbeams glow
On old farm buildings set against a hill,
And paint with life the shapes which linger still
From centuries less a dream than this we know.
In that strange light I feel I am not far
From the fixt mass whose sides the ages are.

Dec. 27, 1929-
Jan. 4, 1930.

Two thousand copies of this book have been printed by
The Collegiate Press, George Banta Company, Inc.,
Menasha, Wisconsin, from linotype Garamond on
Winnebago Eggshell. The binding cloth is
Holliston Black Novelex.

